

COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE : SECOND CHOICE BY URSULA PARROTT

December 1936

THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

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# American

MAGAZINE



*Beginning* THE RED BOX *A* NERO WOLFE MYSTERY  
BY REX STOUT

J. EDGAR HOOVER • HUGH WALPOLE • KATHLEEN NORRIS •

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# CONTENTS:

## The MAGAZINE of Today and Tomorrow

### NOVELETTE

COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE

Second Choice—*Ursula Parrott* . . . . 16

The story of a glamorous woman who had another chance to choose the man she loved

### STORIES

The Red Box—Part I—*Rex Stout* . . . . 12

Night-desk Daddies—*Freeman Tilden* . . . . 20

Crossroads—Part III—*Kathleen Norris* . . . . 26

Red Earth—Part V—*Tom Gill* . . . . 32

Among Those Present—*Maxine McBride* . . . . 36

Daughter of Divorce—*Libbie Block* . . . . 40

Burned Matches—*Robert Ormond Case* . . . . 46

Divine Fire—*Kenneth Perkins* . . . . 52

Happy Birthday from Father . . . . 56  
*Hugh Walpole*

Hide-out—*A Vignette—D. C. O'Flaherty* . . . . 86

Merry Meddler—*Martha Hays Weymouth* 126

99% Honest—*Isaac F. Marcossan* . . . . 18

The Amazing Mr. Means . . . . 24  
*J. Edgar Hoover*

The Perfect 36—*Thomas Sugrue* . . . . 30

You Can Hardly Believe It . . . . 44  
*Beverly Smith*

A Grin on the Ball—*Andy Kerr* . . . . 49

Green Hills Far Away—*William Seabrook* 50

Triple Mirror—*Channing Pollock* . . . . 61

Snap at Your Chances—*Eleanor King* . . . . 76

### FACT AND FANCY

It Takes All Kinds—*Albert Benjamin* . . . . 64

It's the Law!—*Dick Hyman* . . . . 72

Plan It Yourself—*Prize Winners* . . . . 74

"I Want a Man!"—*Prize Winners* . . . . 101

Interesting People . . . . 103  
*9 Colorful Personalities*

What the Readers Say . . . . 178

The characters in all short stories, novelettes, and articles in this magazine are purely imaginary. No reference or allusion to any living person is intended.

### SPECIAL ARTICLES

Career—*Otelia A. Compton, LL.D.* . . . . 11

Cover: Natural-color photograph by *Paul Hesse*

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## In next month's issue

THERE'S ALWAYS A WOMAN, a complete mystery novel by *Wilson Collison*

DECEMBER 1936

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# A Spinner of Charms

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# Advertised Products

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Absorbine Jr.	91	K-R-O Company	168
Alka-Seltzer	154	La Choy Food Products	160
Alseco Anti-Counterfeit Seals	168	LaSalle Extension University	161, 163, 170
American Products Company	162	Lewis Hotel Training Schools	8, 154
American School	167, 173	Lincoln National Life Insurance Co.	165
American School of Photography	153	The	1
American Stationery Co., The	177	Listerine	1
American Telephone and Telegraph Co.	132	Lucky Strike Cigarettes	4th Cover
Arvin Car Heater	8	Lucky Tiger Mfg. Co.	174
Barre Granite Association, Inc., The	152	Maybelline	150
Bayer Tablets of Aspirin	137	Media Research Bureau	7
Beech-Nut Oralgenie Chewing Gum	139	Metropolitan Life Insurance Company	63
Borden Co., The	155	Mobil	166
Bristol-Myers Company	3, 67	Musterole	166
Brooks Company	154	National Caskets	121
Calculator Machine Co.	162	New England Mutual Life Insurance Company	119
Camel Cigarettes	60	None Such Mince Meat	93
Campana's Italian Balm	173	North American Accident Insurance Co.	155
Campbell's Soups	59	Nyalgesic	153
Cash's Woven Name Tapes	156	O'Brien, Clarence A., and Hyman Ber-	168
Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Ry.	160	Old Crow Whiskey	167
Chicago School of Nursing	163	Ovaltine (Wander Company)	101
Colgate Ribbon Dental Cream	89	Page-Davis School of Advertising	153
Corona Typewriters	157	Palace Travel Coach	159
Crosley Radios	171	Parker Brothers, Inc.	162
D. D. D. Prescription	167	Patterson School	165
Del Monte Pineapple Juice	140	Patterson School	165
Directory of Schools and Camps	6, 8	Patterson School	165
Duofold Health Underwear	163	Patterson School	165
Edison Mazda Lamps	4	Patterson School	165
Edwards' Olive Tablets, Dr.	147	Patterson School	165
Eveready Flashlights and Batteries	153	Patterson School	165
Eveready Prestone	117	Patterson School	165
Ex-Lax	149	Patterson School	165
Firestone Tires	5	Patterson School	165
Forhan's Tooth Paste	150	Patterson School	165
Four Roses Whiskey	2d Cover	Patterson School	165
Fyr-Fyter Company	174	Patterson School	165
Gemex Watch Bands	142	Patterson School	165
Gem Micromatic Razor and Blades	111	Patterson School	165
General Electric Refrigerators	71	Patterson School	165
Glover's Animal Medicines	169	Patterson School	165
Glover's Munge Medicine	169	Patterson School	165
Greyhound Buses	135	Patterson School	165
Grunow Radios	145	Patterson School	165
Hamilton Beach Food Mixer	157	Patterson School	165
Hanley Clipshave	164	Patterson School	165
Havoline Motor Oil	69	Patterson School	165
Heinz Cucumber Pickle	133	Patterson School	165
Heinz Strained Foods	172	Patterson School	165
Hennessy Cognac Brandy	143	Patterson School	165
Holmes & Edwards Inlaid	141	Patterson School	165
Home Correspondence School	156	Patterson School	165
Hoover Electric Cleaners	97	Patterson School	165
Household Finance Corporation	130	Patterson School	165
I. E. S. Better Sight Lamp Makers	125	Patterson School	165
Institute of Applied Science	174	Patterson School	165
International Correspondence Schools	175	Patterson School	165
International Typewriter Co.	168	Patterson School	165
Investors Syndicate	115	Patterson School	165
Ipana Tooth Paste	3	Patterson School	165
Ivory Flakes	10	Patterson School	165
Ivory Soap	10	Patterson School	165
John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance	161	Patterson School	165
Johnnie Walker Whiskey	3d Cover	Patterson School	165
Johnnie's Arms & Cycle Works, Iver	170	Patterson School	165
Kelsey Co., The	172	Patterson School	165
Kodak Cameras	113	Patterson School	165
Kool Cigarettes	99	Patterson School	165
		Raleigh Tobacco, Sir Walter	136
		RCA Victor Radio Sets	75
		Reynolds Tobacco Company, R. J.	60, 87
		Rosicrucians, The	158
		Sal Hepatica	67
		Santa Fe System Lines	148
		Schick Dry Shaver	169
		Schick Beer	81
		Scholl's Foot Comfort Appliances, Dr.	172
		Seagram's Crown Whiskies	73
		Seck and Kade, Inc., Pertussin	171
		Simoniz Company, The	124
		"61" Quick Drying Floor Varnish	174
		Smith Bros. Cough Syrup	156
		Spratt's Dog Biscuit Foods	159
		Stephenson Laboratory	150
		Teacher's Highland Cream Whiskey	85
		Tek Tooth Brushes	155
		Toastmaster	129
		Tropic-Aire Car Heater	158
		Tums	164
		Viceroy Cigarettes	123
		Vicks Vapo-Veg	151
		Waterman's Pens and Pencils	83
		Webster's New International Dictionary	151
		Weed Tire Chains	144
		Western Electric "Audiphone"	146
		Wheaties	94
		Zonite	152



*Ab Jenkins* **BRINGS WORLD RECORDS  
BACK TO AMERICA** \* \* \*  
on **Firestone**  
*Gum-dipped TIRES*

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*W. Bradley Hall*

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*Helen Armitage*

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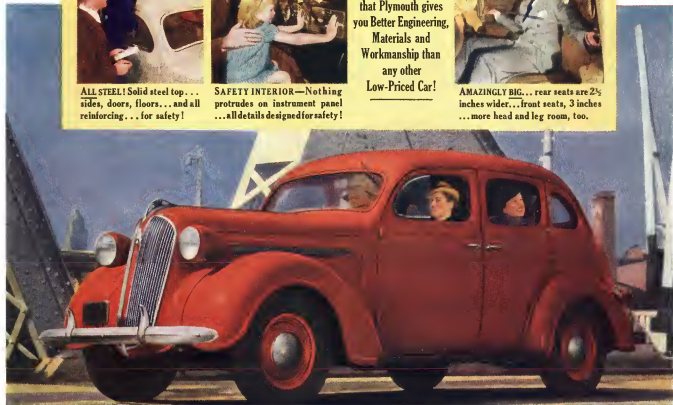


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with **IVORY FLAKES**"



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**SENSITIVE**  
*so—her soap is*  
**IVORY**

Tests prove that the soap which agrees best with grown-up skins is the same pure Ivory that doctors advise for a baby's skin.

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... six complexion soaps were tested—on dry skins, oily skins, normal skins ...

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IF YOUR SKIN IS SENSITIVE, why not take it back to its clear smooth "baby" days with baby's approved soap ...

**IVORY SOAP • 99 44/100 9/10 PURE**



THE  
*American Magazine*  
 DECEMBER 1936

# CAREER

SOME have spoken of the term, housewife, as being not very flattering. Why such a deprecatory estimate of one of women's noblest occupations? Housewife means homemaker. No art surpasses that of making a home. It is in home life that happiness, health, and success have their roots, but, alas, where also the seeds of misery and failure may be sown. "What are you? The tale of your breeding and birth . . . is that which is shown by the light from your hearth." Compare statistics of great men and women with those of criminals and the untrustworthy, then trace back to their home life.

MANY modern women complain that home gives them no time or opportunity for mental growth. It depends upon the direction in which growth is desired. If it is purely along literary or professional lines, disappointment may result, although, even here, success is sometimes achieved by extraordinarily good management. Yet it is hazardous to attempt to serve two masters. If a broadening of intellect and a general, well-rounded, useful life is the goal, what occupation furnishes greater opportunity than that of homemaking and motherhood?

Analyze, if you please, the responsibility and the challenge set before the housewife, and also her privilege: the incessant demand for alertness and adaptability placed upon her. Success

is not acquired in a day's effort. It requires study and patience to discover the needs of healthy bodies and the right food for the spirit. And the housewife must improve herself esthetically if she is to beautify the home and make it attractive for those who dwell there. Then, too, she has the opportunity of being hospitable, and in one's home "angels are often entertained unawares."

A wife is called upon for an intelligent interest in her husband's occupation, that she may be both a helpmeet and a companion. As a mother, there is no limit to the test of her psychic insight, to her ingenuity for directing wisely the child's efforts and character development, and to her maintaining always its love and confidence and esteem. None of these things comes without her earnest study. And, as she studies, she grows mentally.

AN aspiring woman will not lack stimulus for "intellectual growth" if she enters her position as homemaker with wisdom, love, and enthusiasm. Many are the avenues in the home that lure her to greater efficiency. To take time for the study of the welfare of her household is a demand of her vocation, and enrichment of her life will be her reward. Stunted growth is not her portion if she serves faithfully.

If, in this brief editorial, a new vista of the attractiveness of homemaking has been revealed and a deeper appreciation of the importance of the profession has been awakened, it will have been worth while. Truly, "the world is full of beauty if the heart is full of love."



MRS. COMPTON, the only woman ever to receive an honorary LL.D. for motherhood, is the mother of three famous men—Arthur H. Compton, who won the Nobel prize for physics in 1927; Karl F. Compton, president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and Wilson M. Compton, lawyer, economist, and writer.

OTELIA A. COMPTON, LL.D.

Guest Editorial Writer



# BEGINNING The RED



*Molly Lauck had  
dropped dead—her  
fingers gripping strands  
of blond hair. . . .*



# Box



*A baffling new mystery novel in which  
Nero Wolfe, master detective, tackles  
the knottiest riddle of his career*

**BY REX STOUT**

WOLFE looked at our visitor with his eyes wide open—a sign, with him, either of indifference or of irritation. In this case it was obvious that he was irritated.

"I repeat, Mr. Frost, it is useless," he declared. "I never leave my home on business. I told you that five days ago. No man's pertinacity can coerce me. Good day, sir."

Llewellyn Frost blinked but made no move to acknowledge the dismissal. On the contrary, he settled back in his chair.

He nodded patiently. "I know; I humored you last Wednesday, Mr. Wolfe, because there was another possibility that seemed worth trying. But it was no good. Now there's no other way. You'll have to go up there. You can forget your build-up as an eccentric genius for once—anyhow, an exception will do it good. The flaw that heightens the perfection. It's only twenty blocks—Fifty-second between Fifth and Madison. A taxi will take us there in eight minutes."

"Indeed." Wolfe stirred in his chair; he was boiling. "How old are you, Mr. Frost?"

"Me? Twenty-nine."

"Hardly young enough to justify your childish effrontery. So. You humored me! You speak of my build-up! And you undertake to stampede me into a frantic dash through the maelstrom of the city's traffic—in a taxicab! Sir, I would not enter a taxicab for a chance to solve the Sphinx's deepest riddle, with all the Nile's cargo as my reward!" He sank his voice to an outraged murmur. "Good grief! A taxicab!"

I grinned a bravo at him, twirling my pencil as I sat at my desk, eight feet from his. As I had worked for Nero Wolfe for nine years, there were a few points I wasn't skeptical about any more. For instance: That he was the best private detective north of the South Pole. That he was convinced that outdoor air is apt to clog the lungs. That it short-circuited his nervous system to be jiggled or jostled. That he was almost a fanatic on the subject of orchids, especially those raised by himself. That he would have starved to death if anything had happened to Fritz Brenner, on account of his firm belief that no one's cooking but Fritz's was fit to eat. There were other points, too, of a different sort, but I'll pass them up, since Nero Wolfe will probably read this.

Young Mr. Frost quietly stared at him. "You're having a

FULL-COLOR ILLUSTRATION  
IN WATER COLOR  
BY JAMES SCHUCKER



grand time, Mr. Wolfe, aren't you?" Frost nodded. "Sure, you are. Now, look here. A girl has been murdered. Another one—maybe more—is in danger. You offer yourself as an expert in these matters, don't you? That part's all right; there's no question but that you're an expert. But a girl's been murdered, and others are in great and immediate peril, and you rant like Booth and Barrett about a taxicab in a maelstrom. I appreciate good acting; I ought to, since I'm in the show business. But in your case I should think there would be times when a decent regard for human suffering and misfortune would make you wipe off that make-up. And if you're really playing it straight that only makes it worse. If, rather than undergo a little personal inconvenience—"

"No good, Mr. Frost," Wolfe was slowly shaking his head. "Do you expect to bully me into a defense of my conduct? Nonsense. If a girl has been murdered there are the police. Others are in peril? They have my sympathy, but they hold no option on my professional services. I cannot chase perils away with a wave of my hand and I will not ride in a taxicab. I will not ride in anything, not even my own car with Mr. Goodwin driving, except to meet my personal contingencies. You observe my bulk. I am not immovable, but my flesh has a constitutional reluctance to sudden, violent, or sustained displacement. You spoke of 'decent regard.' How about a decent regard for the privacy

of my dwelling? I use this room as an office, but this house is my home. Good day, sir."

The young man flushed, but did not move. "You won't go?" he demanded. "I will not."

"Twenty blocks, eight minutes, your own car?"

"Confound it, no."

FROST frowned at him. He muttered to himself, "They don't come any stouter."

He reached to his inside coat pocket and pulled out some papers. He selected one, unfolded it and glanced at it, and returned the others. He looked at Wolfe.

"I've spent most of two days getting this thing signed. . . . Now, wait a

minute; hold your horses! When Molly Lauck was poisoned, a week ago today, it looked phony from the beginning. By Wednesday, two days later, it was plain that the cops were running around in circles, and I came to you. I know about you; I know you're the one and only. As you know, I tried to get McNair and the others down here to your office, and they wouldn't come; and I tried to get you up there, and you wouldn't go. That was five days ago. I've paid another detective three hundred dollars for a lot of nothing, and the cops, from the inspector down, are about as good as Goodwin; there, would be for Juliet. Anyhow, it's a tough one, and I doubt if anyone could crack it but you. I decided that Saturday, and during the



*"Put him out, Archie!" snapped Nero Wolfe. I dropped pad and pencil and jumped toward the man*

week end I covered a lot of territory." He pushed the paper at Wolfe. "What do you say to that?"

Wolfe took it and read it. I saw his eyes go slowly half shut, and knew that whatever it was, its effect on his irritation was pronounced. He glanced over it again, looked at Llewellyn Frost through slits, and then extended the paper toward me. I got up to take it. It was typewritten on a sheet of good bond, plain, and was dated New York, March 28, 1936:

To Mr. Nero Wolfe:

At the request of Llewellyn Frost, we, the undersigned, beg you and urge you to investigate the death of Molly Lauck, who was poisoned on March 23 at the office of Boyden McNair, Incorporated, on 52d Street, New York. We entreat you to visit McNair's office for that purpose.

We respectfully remind you that once each year you leave your home to attend the Metropolitan Orchid Show, and we suggest that the present urgency, while not so great to you personally, appears to us

to warrant an equal sacrifice of your comfort and convenience.

With high esteem,

WINOLD GLUECKNER  
CUYLER DITSON  
T. M. O'GORMAN  
RAYMOND PLEHN  
CHARLES E. SHANKS  
CHRISTOPHER BAMFORD

I handed the document back to Wolfe.

Frost said, "That was the best I could think of, to get you. This thing has to be ripped open. I got Del Pritchard up there and he was lost. I had to get you somehow. Will you come?"

WOLFE'S forefinger was doing a little circle on the arm of his chair. "Why the devil," he demanded, "did they sign that thing?"

"Because I told them no one but you could solve the case and you had to be persuaded. I told them that besides money and food the only thing you were interested in was orchids, and that there

was nobody who could exert any influence on you but them, the best orchid growers in America. I had letters of introduction to them. I did it right. You notice I restricted my list to the very best. Will you come?"

Wolfe sighed. "An infernal imposition." He wiggled a finger at the young man. "Look here. You seem to be prepared to stop at nothing. You interrupt these expert and worthy men at their tasks to get them to sign this idiotic paper. You badger me. Why?"

"Because I want you to solve this case."

"Why me?"

"Because no one else can. Wait till you see—"

"Yes. Thank you. But why your overwhelming interest in the case? The murdered girl—what was she to you?"

"Nothing." Frost hesitated. He went on: "She was nothing to me. I knew her—an acquaintance. But the danger—Let me tell you about it. The way it happened—"

"Please, Mr. Frost." Wolfe was crisp. "Permit me. If the murdered girl was nothing to you, what standing will there be for an investigator engaged by you? If you could not persuade Mr. McNair and the others to come to me, it would be futile for me to go to them."

"No, it wouldn't. I'll explain that—"

"Very well. Another point: I charge high fees."

The young man flushed. "I know you do." He leaned forward in his chair. "Look, Mr. Wolfe. I've thrown away a

lot of my father's money since I put on long pants, a good gob of it in the past two years, producing shows, and they were all flops. But now I've got a hit. It opened two weeks ago and it's a ten weeks' buy. *Bullets for Breakfast*. I'll have plenty of cash to pay your fee. If only you'll find out where that poison came from—and help me find a way . . ."

Wolfe prompted him: "Yes, sir? A way—?"

Frost frowned. "A way to get my cousin out of that murderous hole. My ortho-cousin, the daughter of my father's brother."

"Indeed." Wolfe surveyed him. "Are you an anthropologist?"

"No." Frost flushed again. "I told you, I'm in the show business. I can pay your fee—within reason, or even without reason. But we ought to have an understanding about that. Of course, the amount of the fee is up to you, but my idea would be to split it, half to find out where that candy came from and the other half for getting my cousin Helen away from that place. She's as stubborn as you are, and you'll probably have to earn the first half of the fee in order to earn the second, but I don't care if you don't. If you get her out of there without clearing up Molly Lauck's death, half the fee is yours anyhow. But Helen won't scare—that won't work; and she has some kind of a fool idea about loyalty to this McNair, Boyden McNair. 'Uncle Boyd,' she calls him. She's known him all her life. He's an old friend of Aunt Callie's, Helen's mother. Then there's this dope Gebert—but I'd better start at the beginning and sketch it—Hey! You going now?"

WOLFE had pushed his chair back and elevated himself to his feet.

"Keep your seat, Mr. Frost. It is four o'clock, and I now spend two hours with my plants upstairs. Mr. Goodwin will take the details of the poisoning of Miss Molly Lauck—and of your family complications if they seem pertinent. For the fourth time, I believe it is, good day, sir." He headed for the door.

Frost jumped up, sputtering. "But you're coming uptown—"

Wolfe halted and ponderously turned. "Confound you, you know perfectly well I am! Archie, we shall meet Mr. Frost at the McNair place tomorrow morning at ten minutes past eleven."

He turned and went, disregarding the client's protests at the delay. Through the open office door I heard, from the hall, the grunt of the elevator as he stepped in it, and the bang of its door.

Llewellyn Frost turned to me, and the color in his face may have been caused by gratification at his success or by indignation at its postponement. I looked him over as a client—his wavy, light-brown hair brushed back, his wide-open brown eyes that left the matter of intelligence to a (Continued on page 88)



A SHORT NOVEL COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE

DRAWING BY  
MARIO COOPER

*Knowlton started  
the car. Nash,  
caught off guard,  
tumbled backwards*

# SECOND CHOICE

BY *Ursula Parrott*

*Family history has a way of repeating  
itself, too—Lavinia Wells sensed it as  
the storm came up over Riverview*

**G** LAVINIA WELLS was dressed early for dinner that afternoon because dinner meant not only the return of her husband from the city for the week end, but the arrival of house guests. Anne Wells, her niece by marriage, was bringing up that young man, Owen Nash, whom Anne seemed to be seeing a great deal recently. She, herself, had invited that nice young Dr. Knowlton, who had so little gaiety and who so clearly adored Anne.

The summer wind blew the curtains at her windows. The clear, fresh June air was flower-scented. Abruptly Lavinia Wells stopped consideration of her dinner guests and stared at herself in the mirror.

All day she had felt unlike her matter-of-fact self. She supposed the reason was simply that the day was one of those supposedly momentous in a woman's life. It was her thirtieth birthday. And she, who had trained herself carefully not to be self-analytical, felt inclined to be. Only, she had too completely lost the habit. She could appraise her externals—that odd beauty of hers which used to startle people, almost dispassionately. It was a beauty that would look a little fine-worn in an-

other few years. Thinking that, a small smile hesitated at the corners of a mouth that used to be too sensitive and was now only too self-controlled.

Yes, she was slender. "Lissome," Rupert Alleyne used to call her. Probably she could be called "lissome" truthfully even yet, if anyone wanted to bother, though it was reasonably certain that after ten years of marriage her husband, Emory Wells, would not begin to

call her anything so unusual. He who had called her "my dear," and written to her "my dear," invariably since she said "Yes" to him.

Once, when she had no doubt been staring at him absently—an old bad habit of hers—he had said out of silence, "My dear, you have most unusual eyes," and that, she was sure, was as much particular notice as he had taken of her in at least a decade.



POSED ESPECIALLY FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE BY CAROLE LONGARD AND FRIS MACMURRAY, OF PARAMOUNT STUDIOS. NATURAL-COLOR PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL NESSE

*It was their hour together. "You may not know what you want, Lavinia," whispered Rupert impatiently, "but I want to kiss you"*

She crossed her wide bedroom to the window seat that overlooked a pleasant vista of green meadows sloping down to woods, and woods sloping down and down to a thread of blue river. That view, when regarded by some forgotten Wells more than a century before, had given the house its name—Riverview. She turned her eyes straight down, where from the south verandas two rows of old-fashioned red peonies bor-

dered a flagstone path that led nowadays only to the meadow gate. A hundred years ago that path led to the Alleyne house.

She remembered that it was Rupert who told her that old story of the burning of the Alleyne house. He had filled her arms with red peonies from the old border, insisted—so gaily—on photographing her by the meadow gate, the flowers dark against her white frock, and

said good-by to her forever there, though she had not guessed at all it was to be forever. For she was no more than a tall girl, who watched his handsome face shyly, breathlessly, but so happily, who listened to his every gay sentence, waiting for him to make the proposal she was sure he would make, else there would be no meaning to June or the daisies painted on the meadows. There would be no (Continued on page 155)



# 99% Honest

Installment buying, much maligned, and blamed for the depression, now emerges as the builder of America's standard of living



FOR six years now Mr. Cashdown has cherished the delusion that the stock market crash of 1929 was caused by prodigal people who bought what they needed on the easy time-payment plan, and so mortgaged America's future. As he makes his little purchases out of his savings account, Mr. Cashdown also virtuously imagines that the depression put an end to installment buying.

As a matter of fact, installment buying in the United States has doubled since 1930. Last year \$4,000,000,000 was employed in financing installment purchases and one of every two persons in the nation was directly benefited by the plan.

And, more amazing, the installment buyers who were purchasing motorcars, radios, and what not in 1929 paid off what they owed after the stock market crash and continued to buy on the same plan. On January 1, 1930, the butcher, the baker, and the businessman owed \$2,500,000,000 in installment debts. They not only paid it off, with a smaller loss than any other business in the country, but they have paid off a similar installment debt three times since the beginning of the depression.

While Mr. Cashdown has been denying himself and "saving the nation," the installment buyers have kept industry going by sending a never-ending stream of cash, through credit, into production. They have constituted America's most potent nonpolitical force for recovery. And they have lifted the American standard of living to a higher level than



**BY ISAAC F.  
MARCOSSON**

that of any other people in the world.

Installment buying is an American institution made possible by the American character, which, the installment credit industry has discovered, is 99 per cent honest—the highest, perhaps, this side of paradise. Ninety-nine out of every 100 buyers pay up.

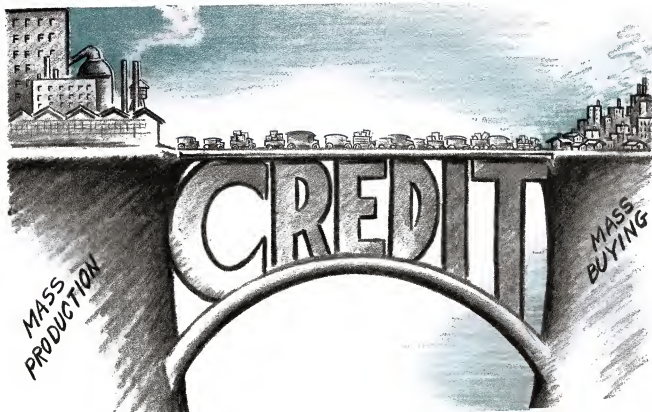
**T**ODAY, because the average man in the United States pays his debts, the installment credit business has become one of the nation's major industries. When you buy a motorcar, vacuum cleaner, oil burner, or stove on the time-payment plan, you may think you are buying it from the dealer to whom you

pay your installments. Most likely you are paying it to one of 3 big sales financing companies of the country. If not, then you are probably paying it to one of 500 other sales financing companies in the United States, all but 5 of which survived the stock market crash and collected their money.

The installment creditors, known as sales finance companies, work very simply. The average dealer or manufacturer must have an immediate cash return on what he sells and turn back his money to stock or production. He is willing to trust his customers, but he cannot lend his money. Along come the sales finance companies and offer to buy, at a discount, his account with you. You may send your monthly checks to the dealer from whom you made your purchase, but the sales financing company gets the money.

In recent months I have been going up and down the country, digging into the operations of sales financing companies, and I have uncovered this paradox: The companies have credit relationship with millions of people but do not lend money. They simply buy accounts—yours and mine—and collect from us on time. While they do not buy, sell, or manufacture commodities, they have a proprietary interest in sales that aggregate more than \$10,000,000 a day. They are limited partners of dealers and manufacturers whose range of sale and output is from a \$20 vacuum cleaner to a \$1,000,000 steam shovel.

What stands out first and foremost, I find, is that sales financing, by making



DRAWINGS BY HAROLD TALBURT

the giving of credit a mass operation, has lowered the cost of goods to you, the consumer. Mass credit promotes mass buying and a rapid turnover of commodities, upon which a large part of the gigantic structure of mass production rests. And mass production, accomplished by gigantic machines, makes for cheap production.

Without mass credit and mass production your new or used car would cost just twice as much as the prevailing price. Motorcar output would be half the present volume, probably less. Sales financing has put 60 per cent of our 25,000,000 motor vehicles on the highways.

THIS effect of mass credit is equally evident in household appliances, which, with the automobile, have given us the highest of all living standards. Ice is still a luxury in England. Most people have to buy it at the fish dealer's. On the English countryside the house with a mechanical refrigerator is extraordinary. Yet the American workman takes his mechanical refrigerator as a matter of course. In this country 21,204,354 homes are wired for electricity.

Eighty-five per cent of the seven most widely used household appliances—refrigerators, radios, electric washing machines, ranges, vacuum cleaners, automatic oil burners and stokers—are sold through the sales financing companies, on the installment plan. In these commodities you have another striking instance of price decline with mass sale. The number of household refrigerators

sold since the beginning of the industry in 1920 has increased from 10,000 a year to 2,000,000 a year. The average price has dropped from \$600 to \$168.

Decrease in price is matched by decline in finance service costs. When John N. Willys started the first automobile finance company at Cleveland in 1915, the rate of interest was 15 per cent, exclusive of high fire, accident, and theft insurance. Now the rate averages 6 per cent with all commodities. In 1915 the motorcar contract was limited to 12 monthly installments often as high as \$300 each. Today the same type of car, with greatly added value, costs a third as much and can be bought over a period of three years with installments as low as \$15. Moreover, the sales finance companies provide insurance practically at cost.

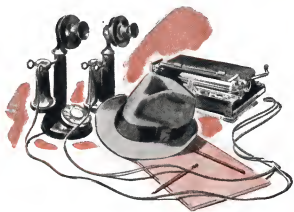
What seems at first glance a miracle, wrought out of confidence in American people, is simply plain mechanics. Just as insurance companies have worked out tables of life expectancy based on health and experience, so have sales finance companies evolved schedules of installment payment expectancy, based on income plus character. A person, for instance, who has a \$10-a-month margin above necessary living expenses can capitalize this margin to purchase a \$100 article over a period of 12 months. If he gets a wage or salary increase, an additional purchasing power is created. One of the principal jobs of the credit companies is to make sure that the client does not pay more a month than he can afford, lest his car, for example, be-

come a burden rather than a pleasure.

The companies carefully scrutinize every credit application. Age, habits, bank account, previous installment purchases, home ownership, all go to determine the credit responsibility of the applicant. Geography has also an important bearing on risk. Because of differences in the cost of living, a \$35-a-week clerk in a small rural community ranks higher as a credit risk than a resident in a metropolitan area earning the same salary. Particular caution is exercised in mill or mining areas dependent upon a single industry. The possibility of strikes and shutdowns, with attendant unemployment, enters into the credit consideration. The greatest hazard is with transient labor, which shifts from place to place. The applicant who gives a hotel address gets a drastic once-over. But, even at that, everybody except a bum is a credit prospect for financing companies.

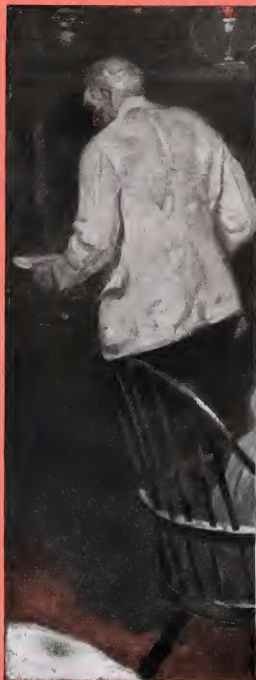
AMONG a thousand automobile, refrigerator, radio, automatic heating equipment, and other household equipment accounts that I took at random from the files of one of the largest sales financing companies, I found that exactly one fourth were the accounts of semiskilled laborers. Unskilled labor comprised 12.45 per cent; mechanics, 14.87 per cent; merchants, 11.21 per cent; salesmen, 6.45 per cent; professional men (mainly teachers, doctors, and dentists), 5.66 per cent; farmers, 5.66 per cent; clerks, 4.74 per cent; government (Continued on page 129)

*Nine hard-boiled newshawks never dreamed  
they'd be the guardians of a pretty girl*



# Night-desk DADDIES

BY  
FREEMAN TILDEN



PASQUALE AMATO'S business was extremely simple, if laborious. He was an ambulant fruit stand. He first opened shop in a wicker basket, and he never saw any reason to enlarge the premises. Whatever the wicker basket was capable of containing, that was Pasquale's stock in trade. It usually contained apples, oranges, bananas; sometimes pears, plums, and peaches; always chocolate bars, chewing gum, and salted peanuts. Whatever Pasquale carried in his basket was the

best that the market afforded. He knew his customers and he knew his fruit.

He was a peasant and the son of a peasant. If he could read or write he never proclaimed such ability. He asked no favor and he showed no fear. He had made a little place for himself, a quiet nook in this whirlwind life, and he was content.

The customers were those who work at night in the business section of the city, when the ground-floor shops are darkened and deserted, the shoppers

abed, the cash registers stilled. The lights gleaming in the upper floors of the buildings tell the curious passer that another kind of life is now going on. They explain the existence of the men and women who ride against the traffic in the trains and the busses and the trolleys; people who somehow look a little different from their brothers and sisters. Some of these are newspapermen; but there are many other trades represented among them. Pasquale cultivated the newspapers as his particular field.



*"Perhaps, Carlotta," Arlin said, "you have too many guardians. Maybe this is a lucky break for me—"*

The *News-Record*, the *Dispatch*, the *Beacon*, and the *Press-Herald*, all morning newspapers, two of them with afternoon editions, lay huddled within two of the city blocks. Two telegraph offices and a printing plant completed Pasquale's clientele. When business was good his basket was practically empty at one o'clock in the morning. Whether the basket was empty or not, however, he went home to Clark Street, in the Italian quarter, at that hour.

When Pasquale first appeared in the

newspaper offices he merely set down his wicker basket in the corridor and stood mutely waiting for trade. Later, by invitation or tacit consent, he made the rounds of the departments—the city room, the night desk, and the coops of some feature editors. He was a rugged fellow, six feet tall at least, with broad shoulders and sturdy legs. Early training had given him amazing muscle.

Once, in the street just outside the *Beacon* entrance, a guttersnipe had badgered Pasquale. Pasquale took him

by the neck, shook him dizzy, and tossed him into the street like a bag of charcoal. That was self-defense, purely. Pugnacity Pasquale had not. His great brown eyes beamed upon everybody with confidence and good will.

He loved to be "joshed," especially by newspapermen. At their ghastly imitations of the Italian-American dialect, he would throw back his head, display a perfect mouthful of cream-colored, firm teeth, and laugh softly.

"Ay, Pasquale, gotta nice-a banan'

dis eeefing?" So it would begin. Then:

"Alla you maka on da peanutta, Pasquale, you losa on da banan', no?"

"Walka dissa way, Pasquale, and showa da fruita!"

"Five centa for dissa orange, Pasquale? You robba! Getta the hecka outa."

It was bald, nervous banter. It was bad humor uttered in good humor. It served to relax the tedium of pounding the typewriter, shouting over the telephone, or writing interminable headlines.

Pasquale understood it. Especially he liked the mock savagery of the gang on the *Dispatch* night desk. They threatened to cut out his heart with a stilet! because there was a worm in the apple. They bawled hearty profanity at him, claiming that he poisoned his candy and cheated on the weekly account, which, for all they knew, Pasquale kept in his head, since he never displayed a pencil.

There were nine men, including the night editor, who sat around that *Dispatch* desk. Pasquale, standing by his basket, gazed upon them with as much devotion as if they had been so many gods. Often he lingered timidly at the door long after he should have been on his way. Just what he thought of what he saw going on in that and similar rooms they did not guess. Written sheets of paper being murdered with editorial pencils; copy being slipped into brass cylinders and shot upward through a tube; strange orders being given:

"Jerry, this yarn will make a good two-column box."

"Where's the caption to go with this cut?"

"Has that loafer in South Brimfield sent that wreck story yet?"

"Chop that Geneva drool! Those diplomatic bums are just gas pumps!"

ON AND on, and on and on. An endless stream of mysterious talk; an endless stream of yellow and white paper ascending skyward through the tube. To where? Pasquale did not imagine. He had never been above the editorial floor. But he knew it had something to do with the printed papers that came whirling out of the big machines in the basement, so fast that they had to be counted by *bundles*. Pasquale knew that the men out in the biggest room, who hammered typewriters with two fingers, had something important to do with it. But these nine men around the magic desk—they were the Olympians. They were strange, awful men—but kind to Pasquale. Generous men, too. "Never mind the change, Pasquale—gimme a couple more apples and call it square."

One night tired Matt Sammons, the oldest deskman, looked up wearily into Pasquale's face, stretched, and said, "Pasquale, I changea jobba with you. You edit this rotten story; I sella the banan'."

Pasquale laughed. He uttered, in his broken English, one of the few sentiments they ever heard from him: "Some mans got strong shouldera; some mans got strong heads. Pasquale all shouldera." . . .

THERE came a night, in the *Dispatch* deskroom, when somebody said, breaking that furious silence which, unbroken, would have sent them all mad, "Where's Pasquale lately?"

"That's right; he hasn't been here for—how long is it?"

"Aw, shut up. What of it?"

"I want an apple—a nice big, red, rosy appul."

Another week passed. No Pasquale. No apple, orange, banan'. Horace Arlin, the youngest desk editor, drifted in, like a fool newspaperman, on his night off. He took a vacant chair and gloated over his working comrades, making ironic remarks about galley slaves.

"Get out of here! Chase yourself,

Horace! Go find Pasquale! I want a nice big, red, rosy appul. Where the devil has that wop gone?"

"That's right! Go find Pasquale, Horace! Wonder if the poor wop is sick?"

Arlin laughed. Then he jumped up. "Just for the fun of it, I will," he said. "I haven't been down in Little Italy for a long time. I believe I'll swing down there and look around."

Horace Arlin had begun as a reporter, had switched to the news desk, had gone back reporting, and finally back to the news desk because Harry Stanley, the night editor, liked the whimsical humor Arlin got into his headlines. Having "covered" police headquarters, Arlin knew how to find anybody he wanted to find. He went to the Eleventh Precinct station. The sergeant on the desk there was Joe Tommasio, Italian-born.

"Hello, Joe! . . . Yeah, long time since I saw you. I'm saving shoes these days, Joe. I'm on the night desk, editing



ILLUSTRATED BY  
BENTON CLARK



copy. How's things? . . . Say, Joe, a fellow wop of yours peddles the banan' up in Newspaper Row. Pasquale Amato. Know him? Lives in Clark Street, doesn't he?"

"Sure, I know him, Mr. Arlin." The sergeant squinted suspiciously. "Nothing wrong with Pasquale, is there? He's a good fellow."

"No, I'm just killing time. No story. Thought I'd find out why Pasquale doesn't show up any more."

The sergeant shrugged. "I don't know. Maybe he's sick. Tell you where he lives. It's that brick tenement house, corner of Brundell and Clark Streets."

It was a warm night and the population of Clark Street was almost wholly in the street. Arlin asked an old woman, seated on the front steps of the tenement house opposite. "Pasquale Amato? Si. Up—there. One, two, three floor—over this side."

Arlin stepped carefully over three infants and a dog and went up the stairs.

He turned to the right on the third, as the old woman had indicated. The thought came to him, "What the dickens am I doing here?" But he was there; and a newspaperman always considers that a good story lurks at every balcony. He knocked.

THE door opened. A woman came, but it was too dark to discern more than that she was young. "Does Pasquale Amato live here?"

A voice that did not sound Italian replied, "Yes, sir. But I'm afraid you cannot see him now. He is quite ill."

"Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. It's nothing important. I'm a newspaperman. The *Dispatch*. We haven't seen Pasquale for quite a while—wondered what had happened. You see—we—sort of miss him. We like him. Hope he gets well soon. Sorry I bothered you—"

"I'm Pasquale's daughter," was the reply. "It's wonderful to have you come and ask about him. It will almost

make him well. If you will come in, I'll tell you—"

"Thanks, I will, just a minute. My name is Arlin."

The apartment, in contrast with the dinginess of the locality and the exterior of the building, was surprisingly clean and attractive. In the better light in the sitting-room Arlin swiftly appraised both the neat, homelike, almost coquettishly feminine furnishings and the young woman herself. That Pasquale's daughter was beautiful did not surprise him. The Italian quarter was full of beautiful young women. But he gasped at the remarkable resemblance to Pasquale—the easy dignity, the high forehead, the dark pools that were the eyes, yet not so dark as to conceal the frankness and good will behind them.

Arlin blurted out his thought: "Why, I'd know you were Pasquale's daughter if I just passed you in the street."

Her lips parted in girlish pleasure. "It's good to (Continued on page 122)



To Pasquale, the newspapermen weren't strange and rough—they were gods

**I**T IS bad enough to be a crooked doctor or a crooked lawyer or a professor in a school of crime. But when a person trades upon his affiliation with a law-enforcement agency to engage in a series of major crimes the high point of villainy is reached. That is why the Federal Bureau of Investigation has derived satisfaction from sending "Gaston Bullock Means to the penitentiary. We regard him as the greatest faker of all time.

Even prison, however, has not completely divorced this weird man from his fraudulent activities. From his cell he continues his career of fakery. Almost every big case brings me a letter from him, written closely on penitentiary paper, announcing that he bears me no ill will for having directed the enforcement activities which have brought upon him three penitentiary sentences, and offering to solve whatever mystery confronts the Federal Bureau of Investigation if he can only get out for a while. He even tried to halt the execution of Bruno Richard Hauptmann by "confessing the whole inside" of the Lindbergh crime, merely in an attempt to gain a vacation from his cell.

Here, indeed, is the most amazing figure in contemporary criminal history. The accusations against him, proved and unproved, have run all the way from murder and will forgery to the supreme fraud by which he obtained \$104,000 on his faked promise to restore the kidnapped Lindbergh baby.

I knew him first in 1921 when, as a newly appointed special agent of the Bureau of Investigation, he lumbered into the Department of Justice, where I was then a subordinate, and immediately began to investigate everything within reach. A bulky man, with a heavy body and long, gorillalike arms, there was about him the air of a person eternally reaching a climax. It was all pretense. Underneath his excited exterior Gaston Means was cool and cunning and crafty.

Perhaps it is necessary to explain how a man who had already been accused of murder could squeeze into a governmental position of trust, even though the Bureau of Investigation at that time was more or less of a political football.

Gaston B. Means was the son of a reputable lawyer. He went to grammar school in Concord, N. C., where he had been born in 1879. Then he was privately tutored and later took a course in law at the University of North Carolina. I have heard a few stories of the off-side play and slugging which are said to have characterized his career on the varsity



football team. After graduation in 1903 he became, of all things, a schoolteacher, and for two years was superintendent at Albemarle, N. C.

Then began his adventures. He got a job as traveling salesman for a Southern towel mill. His story is that he was soon made Western manager. But another version is that Means had a lot of fun on the road by posing as the owner's son and, upon exposure, was ordered back to the mill, from which he was finally fired for fomenting dissatisfaction among the workers. Anyway, Gaston Means left the towel business and talked himself into a job with a New York detective agency. This was about 1911.

Means's qualifications for this job were largely self-manufactured. Here was a man who made a business of lying and made more money out of it than most fiction writers who create weird plots for profit. Not that his stories always "sold."

ONE day Means appeared at an express office in his home town of Concord, N. C., with a box. He wanted to ship it by express to a friend in Chicago. With tremendous concern he insured the shipment for \$57,000.

"What's in it?" asked the surprised express agent.

"Money," answered Means in a deep

voice. "Currency. Fifty-seven thousand dollars in currency."

Just why he was shipping that much money in currency he did not explain. The box was duly insured and was guarded during transit as only a box with \$57,000 in it could be. At last the precious shipment was delivered to its consignee. That person, however, knew the devious tricks of Gaston B. Means.

"I want witnesses to the opening of this box," he announced.

The witnesses were gathered. The box was opened. There was a grunt from the consignee. "I thought so," he said. The box contained nothing but a heavy block of wood.

Shortly afterward, Means appeared at the express office. He wanted to know whether the shipment had arrived safely and was told the circumstances. Immediately he went into a frenzy. His big hands rumbled the remaining hair on his half-bald pate. His eyes stared. His forehead perspired. He appeared so torn with excitement that collapse seemed inevitable. But he rallied and managed to give his deduction of what must have happened.

He had many enemies. Villains were eternally plotting against him. Gangsters or other members of the underworld must have learned that he was making this enormous shipment of money and

had contrived to rob the box en route.

The express agent, however, replied coldly that the box bore no evidence of having been opened. Then he accused Means of having attempted to defraud the express company by having deliberately insured a block of wood. Means accepted the accusation by departing and making no further effort to collect his insurance. In other words, he had gambled a few dollars against the chance of collecting many thousand. He was shrewd enough to know that the express company would not publicize the incident. The same trick or "pattern" might work somewhere else. So Means accepted the failure of his scheme, gave it no more thought, and proceeded to other plans.

HE USED exactly the same method as a private detective. Once assigned to a case he would do little work other than mental gymnastics. Then, having conceived a highly imaginative, tangled story, he would present his report, feeling sure that he had created so many clues, given so many hints of evidence, directed so much suspicion into widely divergent channels, that either his story must be accepted or an entire crew of detectives assigned to the task of untangling it—usually a year's work. In all instances, his story not only was taken for truth, but was regarded as an example of marvelously efficient investigation. His fame as a private investigator became widespread.

On the eve of the World War, Means was asked whether he could further Germany's cause in the United States. If his reply followed the usual pattern, it was that the request was quite a coincidence, because, for some time, purely through curiosity, he had been studying Allied plots against Germany and knew exactly where to find the necessary documents. After that, Germany probably got quite a run for its money.

Then, in no time at all, Means created a national furor by "discovering" that one of America's best-known steel magnates was shipping out submarines on a piecemeal basis. He was given the job of investigating his "discovery" at a salary of \$100 a day, and he gave it up only when a "certain German agent lost a suitcase full of documents."

The story was that British secret agents had stolen them. Nobody knows all the suffering that Gaston Means endured—all the (Continued on page 80)

The chief of the G-Men tells  
the real story behind the fantastic career of Gaston B. Means—  
"the greatest faker of all time"

# MR. MEANS

BY J. EDGAR HOOVER  
with COURTNEY RYLEY COOPER



*Gloria was conscious  
of odd happiness  
within her, a heart-  
shaking thrill, and a  
little fright, too*

*What has happened so far:*

GLORIA HERFORD was a beautiful young girl, daughter of a San Francisco physician. Her mother and father had social ambitions for her, but Gloria was interested in only one thing—her job. She was assistant to the manager of the Lockwood Sanatorium, a home for the aged, until she married Peter Rudd.

The Rudds found a little house in Sausalito, across the bay from San Francisco. Their only neighbors were the charming Baggle family. Tony, the husband, had been crippled in a motor accident. His wife, Kitty Baggle, was his only mainstay.

Shortly after their son, Jimmy, was born, Gloria realized that her husband would never be a big success in the business world, and his lack of ambition caused her to wonder.

Gloria, herself, was a born manager. She ran her house with such ease that she began to want other worlds to conquer. Then her father died, and the world to Gloria and her mother became a strange, lopsided place. Even living all together, it became a struggle for the two women to make ends meet.

Finally Gloria approached Peter. "What would you think," she asked him, "if I got a job? The truth is, they'd like me to manage the Bayview—the old Lockwood Sanatorium."

Peter answered, "No. If you work, it will be over my dead body!"

The young Rudds met this crisis—as they would meet many more. Just how, is explained in the following installment. . . .

BY KATHLEEN  
NORRIS

# roads

“EVER see Karl Pitcher, Miss Rudd?” Nurse Southey asked.

“No; never have. I’ve heard of him. Glands,” Gloria said briefly. “He may not stay,” she added, after a moment’s thought.

“Oh, I hope he does!” ejaculated Ursula Southey. “He’s doing some of the most interesting things now being done in medicine,” she added. “A lot of Eastern men are watching that lad!”

Ursula Southey came from Chicago, which was Dr. Pitcher’s home town. Gloria had learned long before this that the loyalty of nurses to their home-town doctors was in a class all by itself; such doctors were often doing tremendously important things in research or medicine; the big authorities of the Eastern cities were always watching them.

“You work with him, Southey?” she asked, glancing through cards stacked alphabetically in a small box on her desk.

“I did not! He wouldn’t look at me. I’ll bet you they’re paying a fat rent for the wing,” the nurse added, on a speculative note.

“I believe they’re paying three hundred. That’s not exorbitant,” Gloria said, “when you consider that they’ve got the little ward and the pharmacopoeia and the lab, and that whole suite for him, and the diet kitchen. Then there are the upstairs rooms—four of them, with two baths. He’d be a long time finding a research equipment like that for three hundred.”

“He’s not much to look at,” the nurse said suddenly.

“Isn’t?”

“Nope. Small and square and sandy. But, believe me, all the





women fall for him, Miss Rudd. You watch the nurses!"

"I will watch the nurses!" Gloria promised, with a brief laugh. "I'm here for that. Now, about Seventeen," she added at once in a businesslike tone. "I've an answer from her son; it came this morning. He says he'll gladly pay for a trained nurse, but that they want her to stay here. I've just been talking to Dr. Kaufmann. He says we could isolate her in the conservatory room with a nurse, watch her like cats for a few weeks, and see how it goes. I think it's a mistake. Our people aren't cases. They're boarders. We've never had drugs before; we don't know how to handle them. However, what Dr. Kaufmann says goes. So I'm writing Mr.—what's-his-name?—that for a few weeks, anyway—"

"Dr. Kaufmann nothing! What you say goes," Nurse Southey said in affectionate scorn.

Gloria's eyes danced for a moment in reply; then she turned to the business of the day again. "Well, anyway," she said in conclusion, "Dr. and Mrs. Pitcher get here tomorrow at about four. I'll be over there to meet them and show them about, and later they're to dine here with Dr. Kaufmann and me. I don't know whether they've a child or not."

"He's not married," Ursula Southey said abruptly, with a stare.

"Mrs. Pitcher, Dr. Kaufmann said."

"That's his mother, then. Or he may have been married," the nurse mused; "he isn't more than thirty, I should say. Thirty-two, maybe."

"Thirty-two! I thought he was about eighty."

"No, he's young. Youngish."

"Oh-h-h? And wrote that article in the *Medical Review*? Well, good for him," Gloria said. "Anyway, they're coming to dinner, so I'm asking King Lo to have something special, and I'd like you girls to line up and meet them. And look rather decent, you know—first impressions and all that."

"THEY'LL have all their meals with you, won't they?"

"Well, I don't know. I think that's what I had in mind when I said I rather hoped they might not stay. Dr. Kaufmann and I are irregular about it, you know. I go home, or he goes over to play chess in San Francisco—half the time neither one of us is here. However, all that will work out. There's a nice room in the wing Dr. Pitcher could use as a dining-room if he wanted to. We'll see what he wants to do. I'm through here," Gloria said, getting up from her desk in the bright little office, turning to lock a drawer in the cabinet behind her, putting a bunch of keys into the pocket of her white uniform. "I believe I'll walk over to the wing and see how it all looks."

She went through the wide central

hallway of the sanatorium and to a glass-paneled door at the back. Beyond was a balustraded porch upon which a few old persons were sitting in basket chairs or roomy rockers. Wide, shallow steps led down to a terrace; at both ends of the porch were doors opening into the two big wings of the house that flanked the grass and the terrace and made of them a sort of sheltered patio.

THE Bayview Home and Sanatorium was housing eighty-four old persons now; this was its capacity, and to Gloria's pride there was a waiting list. True, on the top third floor there were a few unoccupied bedrooms, and on the floor below, also unused, was the luxurious suite Dr. Lilian Bond, a former manager, had had finished for her sister and herself. But these, cut off as they were from the main building by the surgery, drugstore, and laboratory, had never been convenient for the old people, and Dr. Kaufmann and Gloria equally refused to move into them. Gloria's home was only half a mile away; the doctor was an old widower who wanted only the most modest quarters. He satisfied himself with a small room communicating with the rear porch behind the office, and Gloria appropriated what had been Miss Wilcox's apartment, a pleasant big room in the northeast corner of the building, with a bath of its own. It was cold in winter, but she used it little at that time of the year, and in summer it was airy and shady, a good place in which to do special work or to which she could escape on hot days for a shower and a nap.

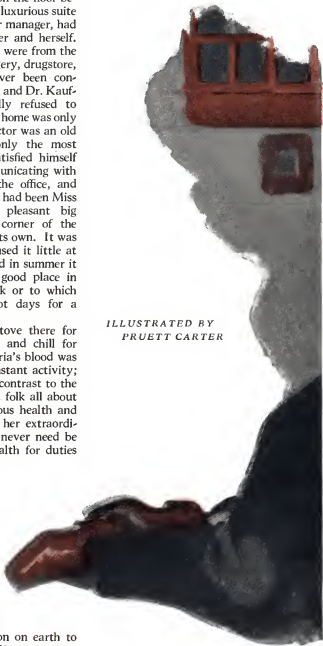
She had an electric stove there for days that were too wet and chill for comfort, but usually Gloria's blood was moving quickly from constant activity; she seldom felt cold. In contrast to the enfeebled and broken old folk all about her she rejoiced in glorious health and strength; it was part of her extraordinary efficiency that she never need be absent or plead poor health for duties undone.

The morning's start was leisurely for an institution, for Miss Rudd, in drawing up the hospital's schedule, had had always in mind the frailty of her charges. Why should old people be bounced out of bed at seven, she had demanded of her board of directors, when there was no reason on earth to get them out of bed at all?

The breakfast hour had therefore been set at nine. But Gloria must be up two hours before that, and she expected all the maids and nurses to be ready for duty at eight, groomed, breakfasted, and with their own rooms in order. She herself breakfasted alone at half past seven.

There was a kitchen upstairs in the sanatorium now; a place quite separate from King Lo's big downstairs kitchen. Here any good old housekeeper who was seized with a sudden need of cooking could compound special marmalades or bake gingerbread or a chicken potpie. Gloria encouraged knitting contests, newspaper puzzles, jigsaws, games. She liked to have the old folk wander down to the village in the afternoons; someone was usually free at about five o'clock to take the big car down and gather them up as they wearily straggled out of the movies, the drugstore, the library, or the

ILLUSTRATED BY  
PRUETT CARTER



post office, and bring them up the hill. "They haven't the strength, Miss Rudd," the superintendent who had preceded Gloria for three feverish months, had told her coldly. "They may drop dead, old people like these!"

"Well," Gloria had answered cheerfully, "and suppose they do, Miss Brooks. Wouldn't that be a pleasant way out for most of them? A movie and a chocolate milk shake, and then—out. I'd like to go that way!"

"I'm afraid you have very extraordinary ideas," Miss Brooks had said primly.

She had determined to report to Dr. Kaufmann that her assistant, Miss Rudd, was not a trained worker in modern sanatorium methods and certainly would demoralize the patients if she had her way. Miss Brooks thought she would add that she did not personally feel it possible to work with Miss Rudd. There was something extremely flippant in Miss Rudd's approach to the undertaking. She must be made to understand that system must be introduced here, and order. Regular hours, firm, if sensible, rules, a strictly limited diet, and no spoiling; these had been Miss

Brooks's ideals, and she had been prepared to enforce them.

Instead, most surprisingly, after her three months' trial, amiable old Dr. Kaufmann, who of course thought everything Miss Rudd did was perfection, had explained to Miss Brooks that they did not feel that she was happy here, not quite—perhaps—in sympathy with the plans of the new sanatorium. It was a home, after all. A home first and a sanatorium afterward.

Miss Brooks had accordingly disappeared, and to the bewildered Gloria Miss Brooks's job had been offered. Two hundred and fifty dollars a month, and full charge of the nurses, patients, the two indoor servants, the gardener, meals, budget, laundry, finances—everything.

And all that had happened almost three years ago. . . .

"HAVE you a nurse you could lend me tomorrow, Miss Rudd?"

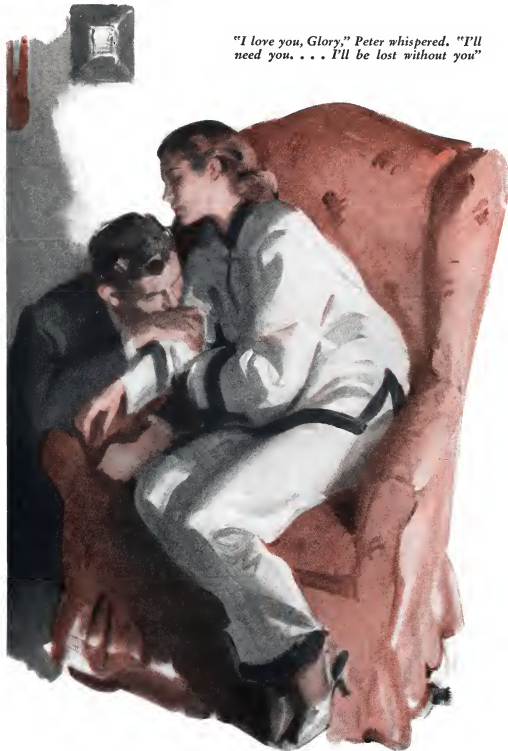
"I certainly have, Dr. Pitcher."

Gloria, immaculate in a plain frock and broad-brimmed hat, stood smiling in the mottled green light of sunshine and shadow; the square little sandy-haired man blinked at her through his glasses. The two had met on the terrace between the big house and what was now known as the "Pitcher Research;" Gloria had hardly seen her neighbor since his arrival a week ago. He had not been able to dine with her and Dr. Kaufmann on the night of their arrival; his mother, he had explained, had been too tired. After that he and the old, delicate woman had disappeared into their own quarters, and, although Gloria had been more than once to call on the invalid, she had not chanced on those occasions to see the son.

"I have a case coming from town—my own nurse will arrange the room and take care of him after the operation," he said. "But I would like a good nurse in the surgery. You would be too busy yourself to give me just that hour or two, perhaps? It's a delicate matter or I would not ask you."

"But I'm not a trained nurse, Doctor. I'm simply

*"I love you, Glory," Peter whispered. "I'll need you. . . . I'll be lost without you"*



*(Continued on page 132)*

# THE PERFECT

# 36



✪✪ EVER since Lord Cornwallis turned his cutlery over to George Washington a certain type of American has been complaining about our lack of culture.

We do not appreciate opera; we do not patronize the Russian ballet; we do not greatly interest in monumental literary achievements. We are a crude people, and we'd rather watch a bobbed-haired blues singer build contralto innuendoes into an Irving Berlin lyric than listen to the best opera singer interpret the dismal fate of Isolde. This, to the patrons of the arts, is a sad and shocking thing.

It is a sore subject with youngsters,

this culture business. They feel, when they slip off to a musical comedy or a movie, that they ought to be attending the opera or a dance recital. But they would rather see a movie. They would rather see, for instance, the Rockettes.

How many times have I sneaked into the Radio City Music Hall to see the Rockettes, when down the street the opera house was ablaze with lights? I could not help it. I have never been able to resist the Rockettes.

And so finally I have decided to face out my shame and to brazen forth my love for the thirty-six musketeers of the

world's largest stage, who are the world's greatest precision dancers; who not only are a rich and rhythmic parcel of American culture, but who personify the American girl at her best.

ALL this came to me very suddenly one night when I had passed by the opera house and resisted an impulse to "better" myself by seeing a dull opera that I had been avoiding like castor oil for years. I avoided it again and slumped into my seat at the Music Hall just as the overture ended.

After the applause the eighty-six mu-

sicians began to play again—a stately, even melody. From the wings came the Rockettes.

They were dressed as Quakers, in modest gray gowns with peaked bonnets on their heads, held firmly by chin straps. Their hands were folded, as in prayer. They moved demurely, processionally. Then suddenly the music faded, as if tired. Only the wail of a trumpet re-

for a moment that they were not going to "get hot."

They were no longer, now, thirty-six Quaker girls. Their heads moved as one, their arms moved as one, their seventy-two legs might have been operating from a single gigantic hip. The audience, 6,200 strong, held its collective breath in admiration.

Here was something almost unbe-

were around each other's waists and their noses were pointed left.

Finished with that, they joined together again and moved upstage—one step at a time, flinging first their right legs upward, then their left. A murmur of involuntary awe started at the back of the theater and moved down across the audience to meet them. This was their famous upstage march, the most perfectly rhythmic parading to be found anywhere in the world. The audience roared and clapped. The Rockettes, stopping at the footlights with right legs upraised, smiled in answer. They had never failed yet to draw that ringing cry of approval.

THEN it struck me. Was not this an effervescence of American spirit? Was not this a part of our infant culture, destined in the future to be to the United States what the ballet is to Russia?

I forgot shame. I decided to call it pride instead. I decided to find out about the Rockettes and tell the world. So I went to work and discovered who and what they were and why. I found out that they are really the greatest precision dancers, the finest human machine ever constructed, and the grandest bunch of American girls ever assembled in one place. And I went around telling my friends that any flesh-and-blood man

Here's the greatest team on earth—a  
fast-charging line of 36 all-American  
girls from 17 states, combining clockwork  
precision with beauty, brains, and rhythm

By

THOMAS SUGRUE



mained, rising higher and higher in its note. The Rockettes stopped to listen.

The trumpet reached its highest note, hung there, and then descended as the other eighty-five players burst forth in a scream of hot jazz—senseless, wild, and howling. The Rockettes smiled, nodded to each other, and began to dance.

Thirty-six bare white legs shot from the folds of their gray gowns. Thirty-six right arms went up over thirty-six heads. The thirty-six left legs emerged. There was a rat-a-tat as the feet tapped on the stage. I leaned back in my seat and sighed with relief. I had been afraid

lievable. How was it possible for thirty-six individual young women to dance together with such smooth teamwork that not a flaw was visible, not a head or a body or a limb out of line? A gorgeous machine with white, flashing legs was going through a quick, athletic routine to the beat of a popular tune that at least half the audience had danced to.

They were at the back of the stage now, and they broke away from each other and did a step that involved bending and twisting and moving so that they could not possibly see each other. Yet they were as perfect as when their arms

who met these Rockettes and came away with only lukewarm enthusiasm was a jellyfish.

"And I mean it," I said to the editor.

"Then write it," he said. . . .

The Rockettes owe their existence as a group to Russell Markert, now assistant producer of the stage show in which they appear, and still their boss. He is a blond, fortyish fellow, with nervous manners and a flair for wisecracks, fast roadsters, and hot dance music. He was born in New Jersey and never danced a step until he was twenty-three. Back from overseas (Continued on page 62)



# Red EARTH

BY TOM GILL

ILLUSTRATED BY MATT CLARK

*What has happened so far:*

"YOU know, Boss," said one of Jack Douglas's vaqueros, "it ain't goin' to be any too safe for you from now on, and six-guns are goin' to be as useless as slingshots." That was too true—ever since his return to the Southwest after a six years' absence, Jack's life had been in peril. A bloody battle was being waged between the ranchers and the copper miners over water rights. More than that, the countryside was being terrorized by a local Brotherhood and by a mysterious band of night raiders led by a giant Chinaman. Douglas had pledged himself to clear up both situations.

What bothered him equally as much, though, was the fact that Paul Bodine, an artist, was coming between him and his fiancée, Lola. Bodine had become enamored of Lola while using her as a

model. Douglas suspected, too, that Bodine knew more about the copper interests than he admitted.

With Lola constantly in the company of Bodine, Jack found himself frequently seeing Alison Neale, who owned a near-by ranch. That caused Lola to suddenly demand, "Are you in love with Alison?" To Jack's insistent "No" she went on, "But you're with her every minute, and you're so sure of becoming my husband that you aren't even courteous to me any longer . . . apparently there's no thrill for you in a game you know the outcome of—don't be too sure of *this* outcome!"

They were farther apart than ever before—an unfortunate position for a young lover who had the responsibility of the entire border country on his shoulders. This installment brings you action galore. . . .



**NIGHTLY** now, long after the others had gone to their rooms, Douglas left the hacienda and, meeting Russell at the bunkhouse, rode with him out through the gate that guarded the edge of the mesa. Far over the desert they went on their nightly errands, stopping here and there at some ranch house to knock on the door and hold long, whispered conversations. These were men Douglas had known since he was a boy, men he felt might be persuaded to join with him, and always the talk was of the coming conflict. How many vaqueros could each rancher be sure of? Would they fight? Some were plainly held back by dread of the Brotherhood. They could not give aid. They would not jeopardize their families and ranches. It was not easy. But others, bolder or more desperately harassed,





agreed to cast their lots with the men of Miracle Mesa, awaiting only the time when Douglas should give the word.

Work out on the ranges meanwhile virtually ceased, for every vaquero had been called in against one of those sudden attacks that all knew were bound to come.

For the raiders themselves were far from idle. Night after night their horsemen rode abroad, leaving a trail of human heartbreak and destruction behind. Fear hung in the very air, fear and a sense of impending fatality, the clash of inevitable conflict soon to come—but not again did the Brotherhood repeat their disastrous attack on the mesa.

Meanwhile, all men rode warily, not knowing friend from foe. It was as if the valley lay at the mercy of some certain

*Alison gasped, "Jack, you're hurt!" He nodded, and fought to keep his saddle—they must go on!*

doom. Increasing numbers of ranchers were leaving, while beneath the terror of the Killer vaqueros and herders began drifting away, looking for work in less troubled parts. The value of ranches had fallen to almost nothing; crops burned brown through lack of water, and broken fences lay uncared for. The miners themselves, rejoicing at the ever-increasing trials of their old enemies, the ranchers, made no secret of their hope that they would soon be rid of the troublesome vaqueros and that before many days all Rainbow Valley would be "copper country." But steadily on both

sides those furtive preparations for the final clash went on.

In the midst of those days of hush before the storm, Sam Record brought back the news from Verde that Paxton had been seen there the night before.

"He was drunker'n a hoot owl," the ranger reported to Douglas, "and the interesting thing was that he had a roll of twenties in his pocket. Now, how did that rum-hound ever get his hands on that much money?"

Douglas shook his head. "Tell me who gave him the money and I'll tell you who is the guiding spirit of the raiders and the Brotherhood."

"Might it be Bodine?"

"It's possible, of course. But, whether Bodine is backing Paxton or not, I'm far less interested in either of those gentlemen than I am in the Killer. Uncover



*"Remember, men," warned Douglas, "for some of us it will be our last ride"*

him, and this orgy of terrorism will be at an end. Paxton's threats and Bodine's scowls don't hurt me much." . . .

Life for Lola had changed but little during those days. If anything, the sense of conflict brought a quickened interest, a welcome relief from the boredom that so easily claimed her. So far as Douglas was concerned, she even found a perverse pleasure in assuming the role of a neglected woman, and alternated between outbursts of angry temper and an elaborate bearing of silent martyrdom. And it was of this Lola and Bodine were talking late one afternoon as she posed for him in his sunlit studio. Both of them seemed a little sad that day, for the portrait was nearing an end.

"IT IS not easy, Paul, this living as if we were at actual warfare, and on me it is hardest of all. I scarcely see Juan any more, and when I do his mind is always on other things—on this everlasting struggle against the Brotherhood."

The artist regarded the portrait through half-closed eyes. "And what are his tactics?" he asked carelessly.

"Better ask Alison Neale." Resentment sharpened her voice. "Maybe he tells her. At least he sees her often enough. Nearly every day she is at our hacienda or he is at hers."

Paul Bodine played with the long-handled brush. "Of course," his thoughtful voice suggested, "a girl who is actually running a ranch, like Alison, would have much in common with your cousin. It might even mean they are planning to enter into partnership." Seeing her eyes cloud, he reached for his palette. "And now a little more to the left, Lola, the chin higher—so. What a perfect model you are—perfect in everything. . . . No, I shall never be able to understand men or their tastes."

She made no answer, but her dark eyes seemed for the time to show content. . . .

IT WAS four nights later, an hour before dawn, that Douglas rode down toward the foot of the mesa, accompanied by Record and Russell. They were not the only horsemen riding through the night. At half a dozen ranches men had saddled in the darkness and now before dawn broke, in response to a cautious whispered word, they were riding to the long-awaited meeting at Alison

Neale's ranch. Douglas was the first to reach there. Two of Alison's vaqueros had ridden out to see that the road was clear and bring him as far as the hacienda. There, with Record and Russell, they waited outside while Douglas entered the vine-covered ranch house.

A low fire of mesquite logs burning in the open grate provided the only light within the room, and before it, chin in her hand, Alison sat; but now at sight of Douglas she called in glad relief, "I was beginning to be anxious about you. These night rides—they are always dangerous."

He took off his spurs. "They are safer than by day. And with Coronado under me I don't worry too much."

"What luck in Verde?" she asked eagerly.

"None. Alison, there isn't a banker who will lend one cent to any rancher in the valley. I tried them all. Well, who can blame them for that?" He drew out a cigarette and she held a match to it. "At the National Bank old Lucas told me he had already loaned a hundred thousand dollars here in the valley that he never expected to get back—he was through. When I turned to leave he called after me, 'Clean up that valley of yours, put an end to that reign of lawlessness, and I'll let you have any amount at any time. But until then I won't touch anything in Rainbow Valley.'"

"If I sell my herd next fall I might be able to help you."

He laughed without mirth. "I am too near ruin for any half-measures now, Alison. Either we crush out the raiders or in one month more Miracle Mesa Ranch is a memory."

Side by side they gazed into the crackling fire, while through the eastern windows the first faint light of dawn touched the face of the desert. For a time he brooded, and at last he turned. "I was thinking of Lola just then. She has been moody and irritable these last few weeks. Has she seemed—different to you?"

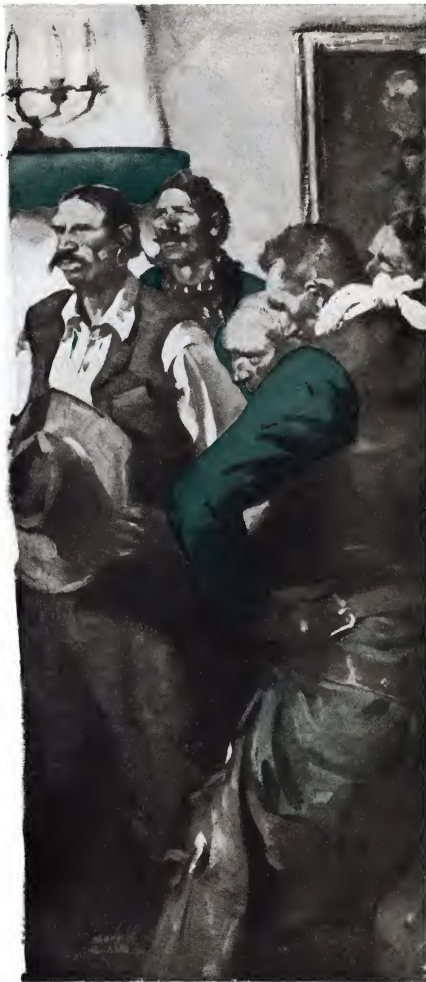
Alison hesitated. "Yesterday she seemed very quiet, a little"—she searched for the word—"withdrawn. I thought she wanted to tell me something, but if she did she changed her mind." The girl looked up. "Paul Bodine once warned me that sooner or later Lola would come to resent me because of you. Perhaps—" She stopped. "But that would be absurd. Lola couldn't be foolish enough to be jealous."

"Of you—and me?"

"Yes."

"Would that be foolish?"


"It would be (Continued on page 142)



# Among those PRESENT

*A home-town girl meets a tall young man... who plunges her into a thrilling new life among the gay summer people*

By  
MAXINE MCBRIDE

 SUMMER was beginning. The high-school graduation exercises were over and the senior class had held its lawn party. The dry-goods stores had lines of bathing suits, blue, yellow, and crimson, like bright beach gorse, in the front windows, and there were fresh stacks of post cards in the drugstores. They were dependable signs of the start of the season.

Dora Baxter took off her hat as she walked down the bluff slope toward town. The sea air was balmy. Her high heels made pattering echoes on the descending walk and her brown hair whipped like curly fringe around her cheeks. The boarded-up windows of Cottage Lingerlonger were being opened and a station wagon holding trunks was standing in the driveway of the one next. That meant the Parrs were due.

She stopped and opened her pocket-book and made quick notes on a pad: It was filled with other names. When she reached the Weekly office she would tap the notes swiftly out on typewriter paper.

She crossed at the foot of the slope, and noticed that Mrs. Murdock had her "TOURISTS ACCOMMODATED" sign in

front of the starched lace of her parlor window. The parlor itself had a couch bed covered with Indian head and pine-needle cushions, which was pressed into service when other rooms were full.

Dora walked along briskly on her slim, spike heels, her hat swinging in her hand. She heard the *phut-phut* of a motorcycle coming, dwindling to a stop beside her.

"Hi, Dee!" Roy Lane said. "Where you going? Want a lift in the sidecar?"

"Going to the office," Dora said. "I can't ride. I have to pick up some items. Isn't it a peach of a day?" She smiled at him from under the flying mesh of her hair.

"Betcha," Roy said. He beamed a wide, clear-cut smile and sat his Special



FULL-COLOR ILLUSTRATION IN OIL  
BY JOHN LA GATTA





*A swell mess this! You crack up and the first cop on the scene is your former beau*

Patrol cap back on his head. "It'll bring the summer folks in all right. Saw six out-of-state licenses on the road last night. Making time, too, a couple of them. One," he grinned, "was Brandy Colson."

"Oh," said Dora interestedly. "Did you tag him?"

"No." He shook his head and slid his

goggles into place. "I let him go. He was driving that block-long roadster. Said he was two days overdue in getting to Clarksport."

"The Colsons are here," Dora nodded. "I had it in the column last week." She poked out a light tattoo on the horn. "I have to be going. Pop Sligh is in a dither on Saturday. Probably yelling

for me now. He's waiting for fillers."

"Look, Dee," Roy said. "I have to go on road patrol tonight. Parker's kid is sick. I'll give you a ring when I come in, but don't wait if it's too late. There's a double-header at the movie."

"I may go to the early," Dora said. "Good-by."

"By, now," he said. He kicked the



starter of his motorcycle and joggled off down the street.

She had gone with Roy for four years—ever since junior year at Clarksport High. To the winter parties and armory dances, when he was home on week ends now from Tech, and to the swimming picnics at Two Mile Beach, which few of the resort people knew about and where all the townsfolk went in the summer. Roy had been star center on the basketball team at High and was voted the "Most Likely to Succeed" when he graduated. He was going to Technical Institute in Boston and working on the extra patrol force during vacation.

DORA had been elected "Class Prettiest Girl." She was lots prettier, Roy always said, than any of the summer girls. He knew a lot of them, from the special patrol job. Their ages and license numbers and how fast they drove down the shore roads in their low cars with the tops down.

It was nice, though, Dora thought, hurrying past the art shop with the new stacks of colored post cards in the racks, to have the season beginning. There

at the *Weekly*, and Pop Sligh looked up meaningly under his eyeshade and motioned an inked thumb in the direction of the wall clock.

Dora pulled up the wooden roller over her desk and sat down in a nicked swivel chair and slid a sheet of paper into the typewriter, the penciled notes propped beside her.

Mr. and Mrs. Raleigh Deane have opened their beach house on Pebble Drive [she wrote], and will be here for the duration of the summer.

The Parrs are expected shortly at their cottage, The Rosemary, on Bluff Slope.

*Roy got to know lots of girls—their ages and license numbers*

were so many more things to write about in the summer. The rest of the year you had only the usual things—that the Clover Leaf Crowd was holding its fortnightly progressive, with games and prizes, that Mr. Fray was in Boston on business—wishing him good luck—and that Nan Ford, who taught a rural school, was visiting her parents on Sea Street.

It was lively working on the *Weekly* in the summer, with the inns and hotels to cover and the younger colony set holding treasure hunts and cabana picnics on the sleekly kept private beach, which had moored rafts but more seaweed than Two Mile. She had applied for the job right after high-school commencement, the same month that Roy had heard there might be an opening in the summer patrol. She had learned to use a typewriter at High, and it was easy, when you were born and grew up in the town, to do the Personal Mention.

It was only an hour before press time

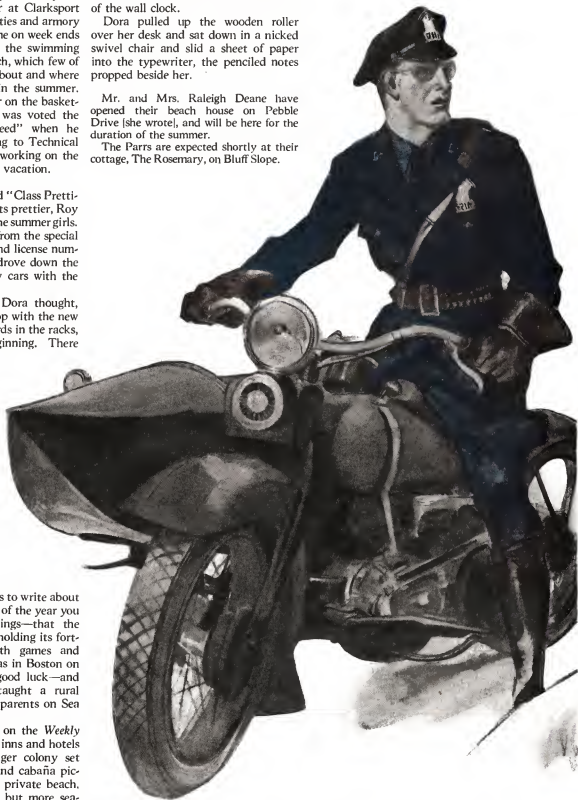
Mr. and Mrs. Philip Grant will not be with us this season. They have leased their cottage, Buena Vista, and gone abroad.

Mr. Brandywine Colson, Junior, has joined his parents at White Chimneys, on Shoreline Road.

Her fingers sped competently over the

keyboard, the carriage bell jingling like a tiny carillon in the rhythm. She covered three yellow pages with type and clipped them together at a corner, ruffling through them with a pencil poised in one hand, speckling in commas and printer's marks.

She carried them over to Pop Sligh's





three cars backed along the curb bearing two-toned plates in colors other than the black-and-tan state licenses. There would be long rows of them parked before the First Street stores in a short time now. Beautifully carried cars and muddled station wagons.

**S**HE passed Roby's Drugstore.

The door was open, and you could smell the cool scent of the soda fountain and aromatic drugs out in the street. She needed a new bathing cap. A crowd of them would be going on swimming parties at Two Mile soon. She retraced her steps quickly and went through the door into the fresh, spiced shade inside.

Jinks Harmer, behind the bathing goods counter, was talking to someone in slacks and a sweater. She waited, flipping over the piles of tinted caps, wondering if white would be best this season. She found one and tucked it under an arm, holding the change for it in the palm of her hand.

"Just a sec, fella," Jinks said. "You taking the white one, Dora?"

"Yes," Dora said.

The boy in the sweater turned around. His hair was very black, with careless, shiny crinkles in it, and his face was brown, an even, steeped brown that would be darker, like saddle leather, Dora knew, by September. His eyes were hazel, bright and long-lashed and appraising.

"Say," he grinned, "don't I know you?"

"Do you?" Dora said. "You may. I made out a subscription," she recollected, smiling, "for you at the Weekly once."

"Sure," he said. "I know you. Your name is—" He snapped his fingers. "I have it, right here in my pocket. . . . Dora—Dora Baxter." He produced the whole of it triumphantly.

"How did you remember?" she asked, her brow puckering a little in wonder.

"It's a gift," he said solemnly. "It never fails. Once having looked at a face, everything,

name included, comes back. Do you," he demanded, "know mine?"

"Of course," she averred emphatically, "everyone in Clarksport does."

Everyone in Clarksport did know Brandywine Colson. Knew him by sight—when he drove through town in one of his series of long, open roadsters—

or to wave to—some—or chat with in a chance encounter. He stood out, distinctive from the other bronzed young sons of summer families. He did things that you had always heard about—swimming across the treacherous passage to Lone Island once and bringing a glider for flights down Bluff Slope another summer.

When you glimpsed him, dexterously edging his car into a parking place, he generally had a crowd with him. Boys from his prep school and, recently, college, who looked alike, with close-cropped hair and mahogany tans and shapeless caps. Girls in pastel sweaters and shorts, deeply brown, with bright-stroked nails and mouths. Virginia Tammer, of Point Breeze Cottage, or Conny Ellis, or friends who were visiting them. You couldn't have lived in Clarksport all your life without knowing his name when you encountered him by chance like this.

"Let's hear you say it," he insisted, gazing down at her banteringly. "I won't believe you do until you say it."

"Brandy," said Dora. She said it distinctly, her cheeks a little pink. "Brandywine Colson."

He savored it. "Nice," he approved. He gestured toward one of the round tables holding straws in the center of the store. "I'd like to hear you say it some more. Are you in a rush? Can you stop for a soda or a lemonade or something with nuts on top, with me?"

"I'm not in a rush," Dora told him frankly. Her smile glanced upward against his haze' eyes.

They sat down at one of the round, wooden tables and Dan Steele came forward from behind the soda fountain.

"Try my own special," Brandy said enticingly. "Dan knows it. Mint and vanilla and a scoop of whatever ice cream Dan picks blindfolded."

"It sounds wonderful," Dora laughed. "I'll have one, please."

"Right," Brandy said. "Two Colson Specials, Dan. You'll never have anything else"—his eyes twinkled across the table—"when you've tried it."

**T**HE Colson Specials came. They were tall and frothy and cool. Dora ate hers slowly, trying to make it last. She laid her long-handled spoon down regretfully on the plate doily when it was finished.

"Do you know what day this is?" Brandy asked her gravely, shoving his empty soda glass back.

"It's Saturday," Dora informed him in slight surprise.

"Saturday," Brandy said, "and I haven't a date. It isn't right to have it Saturday and no date. I hope you haven't one, Dora. I'll never forgive you," he grinned, "if you have."

Dora folded the bathing cap and shaped it into a (Continued on page 150)

desk and waited until he scanned the sheets and nodded and said, "All right, Dora."

It was an hour before noon and she had all the rest of the day off. She ran lightly down the heel-dented stairs of the Weekly and out into the breezy, dazzling sunshine on First. There were



FULL-COLOR ILLUSTRATION  
IN WATER COLOR  
BY ALFRED PARKER

*Ten years hadn't changed  
Becky. She was still the  
same glamorous creature  
Ivan had loved—and left*

Daughter of

**T**HAT pile of books, crazily stacked on the sand beside the green umbrella not three yards from her, switched Becky's memories and brought them, all startled, awake. There were big books and small, most of them brown, all of them old, and loose papers sloppily thrust between pages or flopping lonesomely on the sand.

Who but Ivan . . . ?

From inside the umbrella an arm was extended. The book in the hand was replaced by another book, half a dozen papers were scooped together and carelessly wadded. It was a man's arm, a thin arm, brown-black from the sun. The hand was long-fingered and awkward.

Who but Ivan . . . ?

She looked about her, grasping for reality. The Pacific was the same, thrusting and pulling against the shore, with the sunlight like great handfuls of sequins flung on its restless surface. The comfortable biscuit-tan bosom of the beach was the same. But Becky was different. Not three yards from her sat the man whom ten years ago she had divorced.

She reached for one of her beach slippers, half drowning in the sand. Then she put it down again. Things to be done first. Her mirror. Her lipstick trembled a little as she painted two commas for her upper lip and a dash for her lower. Her hair shocked even her, because it looked so obviously dyed as it was reflected in the mirror. Ivan would hate its being dyed black, but the studio had proclaimed it absolutely necessary for the short time she had played extra parts in motion pictures. Oh, well . . .

The slipper slapped the green umbrella smartly, but there was no recognition from the man with the books. Desperately the other slipper was sent, this time right over the umbrella.

"In front of his nose," Becky smiled and waited.

The umbrella was uprooted, toppled over onto its roundness like some clumsy bird, and a tall, tousled, boy-faced man blinked at her.

Her heart softened and swelled. He always did this to her—just the very wandering, lost look of him. He could hurt her. He *had* hurt her. But a look at him . . .

**I**N THE sand at his feet lay a child's bathing cape, a bucket, and a scarlet cap. Drusilla! Then their daughter was with him. Some place on the sand was her child!

"Ivan," she said softly.

"Becky!" The dazed look was replaced by a very real smile.

With two steps he was above her, looking at her. She could still stand looking at. Thirty-three wasn't such a load of years. Her skin was good; it didn't freckle or burn or tan. Her eyes

were clear. She hadn't gained weight. She reached for his hand, pulled him down beside her.

"Hello, Becky!" he said. "It's good to see you. I've been thinking about you."

Thinking about her. And ten years before he had said, "I would like to have a divorce, Becky. You *manage* me too much."

And because she could refuse him nothing she gave him his divorce. And because he had so much money, because his background had been polished walnut and rock crystal while hers had been plastered backstage rooms and thick china, she had let him have Drusilla.

His hands were in hers. He did not want to take them away, she felt exultantly. Oh, he loved her yet, he must.

"Your hair is dyed, Becky," he said awkwardly. Like a boy, with a boy's way of knowing when he had said the

## *Mother meets the child*

*her ex-husband has molded*



# DIVORCE

**BY  
LIBBIE  
BLOCK**

wrong thing and a boy's inability to refrain from saying it. "But very pretty," he said slowly.

Becky laughed. "Oh, you've improved. Once you'd never have added that neat little postscript."

He laughed with her and shook the still thick brown hair out of his gray eyes. That was the pose of him she had memorized. Ivan, smiling and shaking his head like a pony. Funny how little ten years had changed him. He would not be changed by twenty years, by all the years of all the ages strung together, she knew suddenly.

He was going to speak again, forming his words slowly, as he always did, carefully, as though choosing them from shelves and shelves full of words: "You were married again. I read about it some place."

"Yes," Becky said soberly. "He died two years ago."

"You're alone again?"

"Oh," she said, opening her eyes and rounding her mouth. She scabbled in the sand. "Then you didn't know?" She had found what she was looking for, a toy policeman's whistle. She scrubbed away the sand on it with the palm of her hand and blew a shrill, commanding blast.

"Watch!" She told him, smiling. Then, shading her eyes and squinting down toward the breakers, she waited.

UP THE sand toward them raced two chubby boys, naked and brown to the waist, with wild mops of white hair. They threw their wet bodies at Becky and she held them for a moment, disregarding her yellow silk pajamas. Then she pulled them around, holding them by their swimming belts to face Ivan.

"Petey and Pat Hendricks, aged four years three months apiece." She laughed proudly. "Gentlemen, Mr. Lilley."

Her sons. She looked at their round faces, bright as new pennies, their sturdy little bodies, and knew a throb of pity. They could have been *their* sons, hers and Ivan's.

A shadow fell grayly across his face and she knew that their thoughts had coincided. He said, "Drusilla is with me."

"Bring her to me," she whispered. And, as he stirred, she stood beside him, put an imploring hand on his bare forearm. "Don't tell her who I am; not yet, anyway. I want to know her first." As he started a way she laughed happily. "I wonder if she remembers the stories I used to tell her. Imagine—only sixteen months old and begging for stories. She was clever, wasn't she?"

She watched his lean figure with its awkward, shambling gait, as though he were forever being led, as it dwindled down the beach; watched it grow again upon her vision as he returned beside a small, straight figure in a navy bathing



suit. She thought Ivan seemed nervous.

The twins lay on the sand, examining with minute attention a captured sand crab. Becky sat cross-legged in her yellow silk pajamas, holding her head high, although her heart was pounding. She wanted to love this part of her, so strangely tall, so suddenly a person

instead of a baby. She wanted to be loved.

"Mrs. Hendricks," Ivan said quietly, "this is Drusilla."

"Hello, Drusy," Becky said cheerfully, making room under the umbrella. "Sit here, won't you? You've grown a good deal since last I saw you."

She nodded, and sat obediently, and Becky looked at her. Ivan's soft, humorous mouth. Ivan's unexpectedly obstinate chin. But when she came to the glowing dark eyes under straight young arrogant brows, Becky saw, with a choking exultation, that they were her own.

"Let's see," Becky said, trying to superimpose the infant features she remembered on this enchanting young face. "You're eleven, aren't you? Twelve next month—June sixteenth. Is that right?"

Drusy nodded again. She had not said a word. The reason became obvious. Her hands had been tucked behind her back. Now she brought them forward. One contained a hot dog wrapped in a gigantic bun. A bite had been neatly clipped from one end. The other hand contained a chocolate bar, also partially ravished by young teeth.

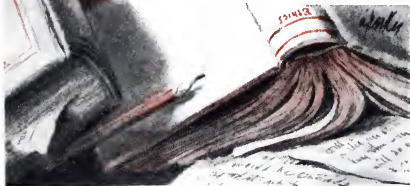
THE girl swallowed with difficulty. Then she waved the hot dog in the direction of the twins. "Can they have a bite each?" she asked Becky.

"Afraid not," Becky smiled, then shuddered over Drusilla's shoulder at Ivan. "Shame," her lips formed.

Drusilla did not seem to resent the refusal of her offer. She waved the candy bar at Becky. "Is that what they call dyed hair?" she wanted to know.

"Why?" Becky uttered the first word that came to her, in her confusion at the child's question.

"Because, if that's dyed hair, then you have a Pomeranian dog and loads of



diamond bracelets that your sweethearts give you."

"What has she been reading?" Becky asked Ivan indignantly. But it was Drusilla herself who answered:

"Anything I want to. Daddy's got some good books about art and stuff that I read sometimes, and I read



Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* last week, but mostly I read love stories. Well, not exactly love stories, you know, but what people do when they're in love. Sort of."

The hot dog went to her mouth, and came away considerably smaller.

"It's so close to luncheon," Becky suggested. "Why don't you throw away those things and save your appetite?"

"I eat when I please," Drusilla told her affably. "Because nobody can do anything with me. I probably will have a hot dog and a candy bar for lunch, and if I want to I'll have it for dinner again. Or maybe I'll have steak."

Petey and Pat were separated forcibly from the sand crab and presented to Drusilla. "Play with them, darling," Ivan suggested, and Becky knew from his voice that he made very few suggestions to her.

"No," she said languidly, and arose. "They're too little. They'd interfere with me. There's a kid down the beach trying to kiss me. I want to see if he can. He's sixteen but sort of bashful."

WITH a "Glad to have met you," she was off, accompanied by the hot dog and the candy bar.

"Well!" Becky said, and it was almost a whistle. "So that's what you've done with her."

"Oh," Ivan said, with one of his funny little hand-gestures, "I've been so busy."

"Busy with your books, and I'll bet that same old treatise on Spinoza."

He nodded and smiled, peering at her from under his eyelids, like a naughty schoolboy.

"Couldn't you have got a governess for her?"

"She doesn't want one, and if I get her one—well, they don't stay. She won't take orders."

"She won't?" Becky set her mouth. Then she caught herself and smiled. Ivan always shrank away when she set her mouth. She remembered. She looked down the beach where the twins tumbled each other into the sand and sat on each other's necks in all friendliness.

"Tell me, Ivan," Becky said dreamily. "Does she know about—her mother?"

"Well, I told her that her mother is very famous, a singer, and when I take her to the opera she picks out the most beautiful woman and calls her 'Mother' all during the performance."

"Oh, Ivan; still dodging reality? Couldn't you (Continued on page 84)



"I know you're thinking of marrying my father," said Drusilla. "He likes you a lot. But I want my own mother. You aren't the type"

# You can hardly

Neither could Grace, modern motorist, who, returning from a 35,000-mile trip, learned some astounding facts about automobiles

By  
**BEVERLY SMITH**



*"The people, the laws, the roads, the very animals were leagued against him"*

**F** MY WIFE and I returned recently from a 35,000-mile motor trip. We roamed through the 48 states, and even down to Mexico City and back. And we never had to lift the hood or fix a flat. I'm willing to admit right here that if either had been necessary I'd have had to call for help—anyway, that's what my wife says.

I did most of the driving, even though I didn't handle the wheel. I wanted my brain free for observation and reflection. Nevertheless, I did find time to do the heavy work of giving directions, shouting advice, and pointing out mistakes to Grace, who did the purely mechanical work of steering the car.

"Step on the gas!" . . . "Hey, watch that side road!" . . . "What's the idea of keeping so far to the right on the curve?" . . . "Sure, we've got enough gas for ten more miles." (I slipped up a couple of times on that one.) . . .

"What's this parade of cars, a funeral? Pass them!" . . . and "I wonder why women can't drive as well as men?"

Grace called my sage counsel back-seat driving, and because of it she brought the car back without even a fender-scratch in 35,000 miles.

But somehow I just caught a hint—say, after we'd driven about 15,000 miles—that she didn't appreciate my opinions as she should. Once, for example, she said—and rather shortly, I thought—"I might prize your advice highly if you knew the first thing about an automobile."

**T**HE remark cut me to the quick. Had I not, when we ran into a Vermont blizzard, rolled up the windows and turned on the electric heater? Did I not, when we struck 120-degree heat in the American desert, direct a filling-station man to let some air out of the tires? What

of my skill in twirling the radio dials? And who, when we ran out of gas because of a slight miscalculation on my part, walked at least a quarter-mile to telephone for some more?

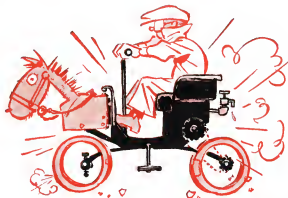
I mentioned these things. Grace admitted that my reasoning might be sound but just kept on remarking that I didn't know the first thing about a car. And that's why I decided when we got home that it was up to me, as the man of the family, to look into this automobile question seriously and find out just how much I didn't know.

The ordinary man might have gone to an automobile school or perused light, frivolous modern reading on the internal combustion machine. Not for me. I had a legal education once and, if it taught me anything, it taught me to go far back for my learning. Blackstone, Justinian, the Roman Twelve Tables, the Founding Fathers. Anyway, apparently it was

# BELIEVE IT

the "first thing about a car" that was sticking in Grace's mind.

And so, in my automotive studies, I went back to the "founding fathers." Being of logical mind, I first went back to my own first recollection of a car in 1903. When I was four or five years old my father took me in the streetcar to the outskirts of Baltimore. I understood that something exciting was in prospect. Mr. Murrill, a friend of my father's, was waiting for us. He conducted us to a



*"... To disarm the suspicions  
and calm the fears of real horses"*



road where a curious buggy, without horse or shafts, stood shaking and panting in the sun.

He and my father climbed cautiously to the high seat. The buggy chugged down the road a quarter of a mile, then back again. Mr. Murrill guided it with a handle.

When the buggy stopped, my father and Mr. Murrill jumped out hastily, beating the seats of their pants with their hands. Then they got buckets of water from the creek, and poured it over the buggy seat to cool it off.

After a while I was allowed to get in with them for a little ride. It was wonderful until the seat heated up again and we had to scramble out.

Papa and Mr. Murrill agreed that it was a wonderful automobile-machine, well worth the \$2,000 Mr. Murrill had paid for it. The hot seat was a small flaw, due to the two-cylinder engine

under the seat. Mr. Murrill planned to fix that by buying asbestos cushions. Then he would be able to drive it miles at a time.

When, pursuing my studies, I went to the public library and began getting down the dusty volumes, I was never able to identify Mr. Murrill's machine, but I found something else: a strange and fascinating world, the world of the horseless carriage at the turn of the century—from 1895 to 1905.

The entire older generation remembers that world, vaguely. I have heard my share of reminiscences about it. But the reminiscences are so colored by our present motor-sophistication that the original spirit is lost, just as an ancient brandy is spoiled when it is blended heavily with new liquor.

But in those magazines and newspapers of 1895-1905 I found, preserved in dusty bindings, the true and ineffable bouquet of the dawning motor age—written by the men themselves, men immersed in all the queer controversies, humors, theories, fanaticisms, errors, fiascoes, and triumphs of an epoch so close at hand, yet so remote.

Those men did not even speak our automotive language. Consider this 1900 dispatch from Chicago:

"A frightened horse jumped into the tonneau of Mr. Carl Meyer's hydrocarbon phaeton, tearing the canopy, bending the propeller, damaging the refrigerator, and breaking off one of the mud-splashers."

Even Grace didn't understand that. But it is simple (Continued on page 112)

## MY FIRST CAR

IN Memphis, Tenn., lives a tailor, Fred W. Langbein, who for twenty-seven years has spent three hours every Sunday morning (except three Sundays when he was sick) polishing up his first and only car! He bought the car for \$895 back in the days when they still yelled "Get a horse!" and he says he has used up four speedometers grinding out nearly 600,000 miles.

That first car of yours . . . remember the thrill you got out of it? How you polished and dusted it? How you took it up the steepest hill in town, just so you could tell the

neighbors about its great performance?

Maybe your first car was of the "horseless carriage" vintage. Or maybe it is a brand-new streamlined 1937 model. In any event, write us a letter telling about it and your most interesting or unusual experiences as the owner of it. For the most entertaining letter on the subject, "My First Car," we will pay \$25; for the second best, \$15; third best, \$10. Address your letter to AUTOMOBILES, THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE, 250 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y.



IT'S cold that morning, mighty cold. Big Matt Britt and his partner, Joe LaPine, lean against their cabin door, thumbs hooked in their belts, and watch the boys get under way. All the rest of the camp—there's a dozen or more—are mushing down to Circle City to meet the seven long months of winter as it should be met: Where fuel is stacked high and red-bellied heaters roar. Where the notes of the bull fiddle, the clink of glasses, and the voices of mighty liars drown out the drums and trumpets of the storm.

But Matt and Joe are sitting tight. They've been partners for twenty years now, and they're wintering right there, on the Little Salmon.

"Why not?" says Big Matt. "We've

got a good shack. There's plenty wood, beans, and bacon. There's moose steaks hanging in the cache. There's a deck of cards on the table and a keg of square-face under the bunk. Why go down to Circle and listen to you fireside trail-blazers? We'll see you in the spring. Eh, Joe?"

"We'll get along," says Joe, tugging at his walrus mustache. He's a little man, is Joe, quiet and easygoing, with a twinkle in his eye like the glitter of sunlight on the snow fields.

"Yeah," he says, placid; "we'll struggle along."

There's plenty of humor bandied around while the teams are getting lined out. Bets are laid on how soon the hermits will crack under the strain and come mushing in to Circle. If they're

still at the diggings by Christmas, it's even money that one comes in alone.

But Matt and Joe are unconcerned. Outwardly, that is. Matt grins and Joe strokes his mustache as the teams pull out on the flat, single file. They watch the column move farther and farther out, until it's a tiny, jointed serpent, getting smaller and smaller. Finally it's just a thin line that doesn't move at all. Matt loses it first, his eyes being not so good as Joe's on the long shots. Then Joe turns back, blinking on account of the glare on the snow. And they look at each other. For a minute you could have heard a match breaking two hundred yards away. You know how it is in the North.

"Quiet, ain't it?" says Joe.

"You're right," says Matt, grinning.

# Burned MATCHES



BY ROBERT ORMOND CASE

They got organized right away, laying plans to chisel down, minute by minute and hour by hour, the great, vast hunk of time before them. That's the joker about the long cold, you understand; when two lads winter alone. You're holed up for seven months. You can't work the claim until the spring thaw. Unless you're busy, your thoughts are free; and they're ranging out on strange trails and digging in strange gravel. Sometimes, when you get down to

spiritual bedrock, there's nothing there. Even gold's yellow rock, in a manner of speaking.

But Matt and Joe, being old-timers, know all the tricks. There's plenty to do, if you just spread it out thin enough.

First, there's wood to be cut. They've got plenty, but they *might* need more. So they cut the wood and sled it down. It takes a month, moving slow. They stack it around the shack, three sides, clean up to the eaves. They don't need

that much, but it helps to hold in the heat.

"There's a month gone," says Matt. "Not bad."

Then there's the meat cache. It's high enough so the dogs can't reach it, but the wolves will be down from the mountains when the real cold sets in. So they raise it higher. A grizzly can't shake it down now. Only an eagle can touch it.

"That's fine," says Matt, squinting up at it when it's done. "There's a meat cache."

"And two more weeks to the good," says Joe. "Old son, ain't we kidding ourselves?"

"Who ain't?" Matt comes back at him.

That's a clue showing which way their thoughts are drifting. They're creeping up on a showdown that's been long years on the make. But they're putting it off, as yet. There's plenty of time.

A storm rolls in from the Endicotts. It's a regular buster that screams and whoops around the eaves for days, blotting out the world in driving blackness. It's

*He came too late . . . Joe was already crouching down there in the ice-walled canyon*



*Alone in the grip of Arctic winter, two men waited for a showdown that had been due for twenty years — a powerful story of a man's faith*



pleasant just to lie there in their bunks and listen to 'er blow. The stout walls shake and the old heater grins redly in the gloom.

Then, the storm blown over, comes the great, still cold.

They're ready for that, too. They can't stir out of the cabin except for shoveling a path to the water hole, feeding the dogs, fetching in wood, and the like. But they've got a moose hide, cured during the summer. They fetch it in, cut it into strips, and work it over into new webs for their snowshoes. The old webs aren't frayed badly, but you can never tell when you'll need good snowshoes.

Next, they prow amongst the other cabins—empty now—and collect all the old newspapers and magazines they can find. They read 'em until they know each word by heart, including the advertisements. They discuss all this, beginning with the yarns. How haywire

whole world aglitter beneath the northern lights and the stars. But there's something about those long night hours when the husky chorus rises up from the ridge above camp, muted and long-drawn and quavering. A husky is three quarters wild, you understand, but the dog strain in them is asking questions born of sorrow and toil and hopelessness that can never be answered. An old-timer savvies their talk.

"You know, Matt," says Joe, "you said something, when we finished that meat cache. We do kid ourselves about our penny-ante chores. But there's one thing to hold on to, when everything else goes—"

"Phooey!" says Matt. "Let's play cribbage."

"Excuse it," says Joe. . . .

THEIR cribbage session lasts two weeks. First, one's ahead, and then the other; and then Matt begins to

even the hardest winter and the ages.

It gripes Matt to watch him. But there's nothing to be done about it. Here's the only way in which he can't dominate Joe.

It's a simple gadget Joe's carving out. Two square sticks, all scraped and polished. One's longer than the other. He notches them and fits them together. He hasn't got any nails or glue. He doesn't need 'em, because he's worked so carefully and he's such a mechanic with his knife that the edges are perfectly true.

It takes several evenings to finish it. Matt watches him, puffing on his pipe. When it's done, Joe holds it up and turns it round and round, looking at it.

"What is it?" growls Matt. He knows what it is, but is just feeding the flames. "It's a cross," says Joe.

He puts it on a small shelf in the corner, at the foot of his bunk. Then he sits down again beside the stove.

"Phooey!" says Matt.

Joe doesn't make reply. He just sits there, placid and comfortable, stroking his mustache, looking toward the corner above his bunk. Matt knocks the ashes from his pipe. He gets up and stretches, yawning. He's a big man, like I said. He goes over to the corner by Joe's bunk and stretches out his hand. Joe's up beside him like a cat. There's a glitter in his faded eye, but it isn't sunlight on the snow fields this time. It's just snow fields.

"What you aim to do, Matt?"

"I'm a man of patience," says Matt, and his voice rumbles in his chest; "but this is the nineteenth winter I've watched your crazy whittling. I'm throwing this gadget in the fire."

"You ain't," says Joe.

He takes hold with his right hand and raises up his left arm to protect his face. Matt slaps him down, regardless. Joe's on his knees, and on his side. Still he clings to the cross and can't be shaken loose; but Matt slips in under his arm. It isn't his open hand this time. Joe's down and out, over beside his bunk. Matt kicks the door of the heater open. Just for a second a fiery cross roars and crackles; then it's gone. The door shuts, and the cabin's as quiet as before.

MATT picks Joe up and lays him out on the bunk. He explores his jaw to see that it isn't broken. Big as they are, his fingers are gentle now. It's hurt him the worst, slapping Joe down. He loosens Joe's shirt and listens to him breathe. Then he leaves him and drags out the keg of squareface.

He pours out a couple of drinks. A small one for Joe. A big one, in the dipper, for himself. Joe gulps his down, which shows he's coming to. Matt sits on the edge of his bunk, the dipper in his hand, waiting.

Joe opens his eyes and looks around. For a long minute he stares hard at the empty corner (Continued on page 70)



*The cross was torn from his fingers*

some of 'em are, and how the lads who wrote 'em never tried to drive dogs into the teeth of a screaming blizzard.

After that, their conversational trails roam the world. They wing through space, in a manner of speaking, and crawl through halls of time. They drag out old, decrepit stories and pass 'em in review. Like the one about the greenhorn in the Klondike rush who didn't bring any grub with him, figuring to buy his lunch from the farmers in the Yukon Valley.

THERE'S only one subject which they avoid. But one evening they find they're just sitting there, one on each side of the stove, looking at each other. Big Matt isn't grinning now, his teeth clamped on his pipe. Joe's as placid as ever, sitting there stroking his mustache. There's a watch hanging on the wall, a big silver watch, and you can hear it ticking.

There isn't much difference between night and day now, with the sun little more than a blush along the southern horizon and the rest of the time the

pull away. They keep a tally of the games, and he keeps getting farther and farther in the lead. It's always been that way in their partnership. He takes the lead; Joe trails behind.

But one night, 'way late, he puts the cards in front of Joe, and Joe doesn't cut them. He doesn't even see the cards. He's thinking about something else. Rage gripping him, Matt sweeps the cards off the table and kicks the board under his bunk. That's the end of the cribbage and the end of the trail. They've gotten down to bedrock.

When the long hours swoop down, Matt sits on one side of the stove, waiting. Joe sits on the other; and Joe begins to whittle.

Matt watches him, saying nothing, gripping his pipe with gorilla hands to keep them from trembling. He knows what Joe's making. It's a symbol of the spiritual ace in the hole to which Joe's clung, regardless, during those long years. When all other recourse fails, he whittles it out and hangs it on the wall, where he can see it. With it before him, so he's always claimed, a man can face

# A grin on the Ball

BY  
**ANDY KERR**

WITH  
HAROLD A. FITZGERALD



INTERNATIONAL  
NEWS PHOTO

**Today's football warriors wisecrack on the field and sing in the showers. They play for fun as much as for victory, says Colgate's famous coach. . . . But they could run rings around the grim, do-or-die elevens of old**

★ NOT long ago one of Colgate's old-timers dropped in to see the football team practice, then head for the showers for a little serious work on *Honey* and *Sweet Adeline*.

"Enough pep left to sing?" asked the veteran sarcastically.

"Sure," I said. "Just stick around and listen. You know that place in *Honey* where the baritone goes, 'I'll be troo-oo-oo'? That takes precision as well as pep, and I want you to hear Marty McDonough do it."

The old-timer looked at me with frank disgust.

"So that's what football is coming to, is it?" he growled. "Just a bunch of softies . . . sissies. In my day we turned out iron men, not singers. Football was grim, hard business."

When I answered that, I answered thousands of old grads and football fans who think that modern football has degenerated.

"Football isn't a grim, hard business any more," I said. "It's a game, and we have a lot of fun playing it."

I could have told him that the boys harmonizing in the showers were the best-conditioned athletes in the land . . . not grim iron men, but happy, zesty ones. While the old-timers scrimmaged three hours every day, and cracked up more than once in head-on tackles, we scrimmage very little after the middle of October. Perhaps once during the week we have a set-to that lasts from half to three quarters of an hour, but the regulars are used sparingly. Those muscle-bound, overtaxed boys of the old days would be winded and outpointed if I set them up against my squad. We get lots of fun playing these days . . . and it's fun that makes the modern game as fast as fencing. Football isn't battle or bullfighting any more; it's lightning-fast sport that

leaves the boys singing even after practice.

Last year Colgate journeyed from Hamilton, N. Y., to Iowa City, where we lost a hard-fought game 12 to 6 and the Colgate coaching staff was a bit glum as we began that long homeward journey—but not the players. You might visualize a downcast, gloomy aggregation looking soberly out of the windows with that "faraway" expression which indicated they were brooding over defeat. Not at all. One of our boys had been detected hoarding bananas on the way out, and the squad spent most of the return journey trying to corner a fresh supply to plague him, and by the time we reached Hamilton they even had the coaches helping. They had played a game for fun, and forgotten it.

IN THAT game Fate had tossed a mocking smile in our direction by letting a lateral pass score for Iowa. Colgate had been a national leader in the development of laterals and now one of them out beyond the line of scrimmage had let the Thunder Cloud in the dark flesh of Oze Simmons sweep 60 yards for a touchdown. A Syracuse newspaper had the irony to headline our defeat:

**"LATERAL PASS BITES ITS PAPA."**

That evening a couple of the Colgate boys started calling me "Papa" in a respectful and innocent way, and it helped me realize more clearly the very thing I had been teaching them—that we played the game for fun as well as for victory. So I just forgave Iowa its touchdowns and got back into the spirit of the boys.

But most of my worries come from outside. Any coach will tell you that it's twice as easy to face his own squad, after a lost game, as it is the friends of his institution. The boys are ready to start talking about Mussolini, Charley Gehring, or the Syntactic Peculiarities of Thucydides, but the friends and grads darkly concentrate on the "how's" and "why's" of that awful defeat.


Last fall (Continued on page 66)

# GREEN HILLS

## far away

A famous globe-trotting reporter tells why he left America—and why he is glad to get back

BY  
WILLIAM SEABROOK

 ABOUT the most hundred percent, stay-put, dyed-in-the-wool American phenomenon I have ever encountered in this land where I was born—but from which I expatriated myself soon after the World War—is old Ma Kilmer, who lives up the road a piece and works half-days occasionally for us and other rural neighbors when she feels like it or needs a dollar.

The other evening she telephoned me. She had a can of worms and was inviting me to go fishing next morning. I was flattered, but I needn't have been. It merely proved that I had been corrupted by living too long in caste-ridden Europe. She'd have just as willingly gone fishing with Mrs. Astor's horse—or Mrs. Astor.

Ma Kilmer is a personage, as much so as any grand duchess or dowager, but completely oblivious of economic, class, or caste distinctions; past seventy, small, faded, gray, wrinkled, and cocky as a robin. She wears any old cotton dress, slippers, a flopping farm hat or sometimes a sunbonnet, and always an apron, except when she goes to church and funerals.

She has a roof over on the hillside towards the Cranberry Fly, a few acres, a dog, a fence, a field of string beans, a barn of sorts, a lot of chickens, and an

old limousine for which she paid \$39 before the World War. She picks Rhinebeck violets in greenhouses for a couple of weeks every year to renew the license and pay me back the \$5 she borrowed for gas the previous summer. I may add that she is notoriously the best person there is to go fishing with in these parts if you're willing to leave your fancy tackle at home.

"THERE'S no nonsense about Ma Kilmer ever," I was thinking as I sat next morning on my front porch waiting for her familiar figure to come trudging around the bend of our little road, with hickory pole and the equally familiar gunny sack, which would smell faintly of fish from the last time. I had offered to go by her house but she said no, she'd come by my house. There are several good ponds, lakes, and creeks right here in the township, one in actual sight of my front porch, so I figured we'd foot it, as we often did, to one nearer my house than hers.

But suddenly I heard a honk, and instead it was Ma Kilmer in the old car she hadn't had out of the barn since the Firemen's Convention.

I went down to the gate, where the car stood rattling, and said, "I thought we were going fishing this morning."

"We are," she said truculently. "Leave them contraptions of yours at home, but bring a loaf of bread an' some coffee."

I stared at her, and at the gauge on her dashboard. She had all of six gallons of gas in the tank and a faraway look in her eyes.

"Are we going to Florida," I asked, "or maybe California?"

"No," she said. "Shut up and get in. We're goin' to Pine Plains. I've heard of a better place over there."

Pine Plains is not merely out of our township, it's almost out of the county, nigh into Connecticut.

People have different family names over there that you've never heard of, and go in for raising baby beef instead of violets.

"For heaven's sake, Ma," I said, "you always get all the fish you want around here. You get more fish than anybody."

She said, "We're goin' to Pine Plains. We'll get bigger ones over there, an' you can pay half the gasoline."

So we went all the way over to the edge of Connecticut, despite the fact that we had better ponds and the whole Hudson River right here in our own back yard; and the fish we didn't catch, plus one bass we had no business to catch, plus a strange game warden who appeared inopportunely, minus the license I'd left at home with my fancy gadgets, might make a whole story in itself if I were that kind of writer. But since I am a globe-trotting, reformed expatriate instead, it will serve perhaps to illuminate this different piece, which has the same moral but goes a lot farther afield than Pine Plains or Connecticut.

As we rattled sadly homeward, Ma Kilmer said, musingly, "Who'd of thought we'd ever git into such a mess as that!"

"I would of!" I replied bitterly. "But I thought you'd have more sense."

"Well, I'd of thought so, too," she



PHOTOGRAPH BY GEORGE W. KASSER FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

*"So Ma and I went all the way over to the edge of Connecticut to go fishing, although we had better ponds right in our own back yard. . . . And the fish we didn't catch!"*

said, "but I reckon it's a disease that hits everybody sometimes."

"What disease?"

"Itchin' feet. No matter where you are, you git restless and go somewhere else." . . .

In the face of Ma Kilmer's simple diagnosis, I have been thinking frequently, since our fishing trip, that perhaps the most extraordinary of all

delusions that a lot of us writers, poets, journalists, and intellectuals suffered when we started migrating in hordes to Europe in the early twenties was the delusion that there was something special about us and what we were doing. We felt, or thought we felt, that our freedom, ideals, potential geniuses were being stifled in this butter-and-egg United States of America, and that we must

save our souls by going and living with overcivilized Europeans or undercivilized African savages. While not many of us were of much importance individually, a few were already important and still are; and since we were all articulate, noisy, and in some cases spectacular, we got a vast amount of circus publicity. We thought we were a Crusade, a Movement, an Exodus, (Continued on page 98)

**V**ERA picked up her suitcase, slipped out to the garage, and got into her car. The gale whipping through the windbreak drowned the sound of the self-starter, but she took the added precaution of waiting until the motor was warmed up before driving out. With that roar in the windbreak her husband would not awaken. The only sound that would disturb him was a negative one—a drop in that wind which meant danger to his grove.

Out on the palm-fringed boulevard she turned on the radio, searching dance music. But the first thing that drifted out of the air was the weather report broadcast to the ranchers:

"Covina 30, Redlands 29, Pomona—"

She turned the dial quickly. Would she have to hear that voice now, when it had drummed into her ears all winter! She got music, but only after that other voice called again, like someone drowning, crying for help, gulping, then silenced ruthlessly.

The dance rhythm thrummed in Vera's bones. She was lifted into waves of moonlight and motion and happy cadences. She put down both windows of the car so that she could whiff that vast rush of cold which came from the San Gabriels. It intoxicated her. She lived. She was free.

But after a few miles the music broke off again, and there came that petulant and pleading call:

"Pomona 29, San Bernardino and vicinity 28—"

Vera could not understand how there could be such a drop after the hot sunshine of that afternoon. Just five hours ago she had stood in the front room with the sun streaming on her. She remembered how Ted exclaimed in delight at the way the sunshine lighted her. She saw wonder in his eyes, as if she were looking at a mirror which flashed back her own image. According to Ted's eyes she was radiant with light.

**AS FOR** Ted, he was radiant with his own joy. He had a lovely wife and, what was more important to his happiness, he worshiped her. He owned what the Gabrielino Indians said is given only to those whom the gods love—an orange grove. They lived in an air that was always fragrant and glorious. A glow hung over the ranch, golden and warm from the orange trees, sparkling and clear from the snow-capped sierras close by. Bees hummed in a wild frenzy. And Ted announced that afternoon that he had sold his crop. For the first time since he had inherited the ranch from his father, Ted Denning's worries were over.

Vera received the news with a sigh of enormous relief. It was the moment she had waited for patiently during four endless months.

"His troubles are over. He's on the

crest," she said to herself. "I can leave him now. I'll leave tonight."

Then she said aloud, "Are you sure, Ted, nothing can happen before you get your check?"

"They've given me an advance," he said exuberantly. "The pickers are coming Tuesday. I'll get the rest of the money when the fruit's weighed in at the packing house. It'll put us 'way ahead." He was absorbed, confident.

She wanted to be sure of it. Once before, when she first decided to go back to Hollywood, Ted had had some bad luck. Blue mold was destroying a lot of his fruit and the bank had refused to advance any more money. Ted came to her with these troubles like a boy to the knees of his mother. He told her they might lose the ranch. She had decided to wait until his luck turned. She could not leave him when he was down. She

*The Mexicans stood by humbly as Ted gathered her up in his arms*



ILLUSTRATED BY  
FRED LUDEKENS



would wait until he sold the navels and sweets. The time had come. He was on top of the world.

"Now we can play," he was laughing. "You've been cooped up all winter with nothing to do. And it was pretty hard for a girl like you, who always wanted a career. It's been hard on you, staying home from dances and letting all our friends drop out. But I was afraid to leave the grove, with our fortune hang-

ing on those trees. On cold nights I haven't dared to leave even for a bridge game. But you've stuck by me like a sport."

YES, she was a good actress. She had stuck like a sport—and a loving wife. It was easy to play the part, for she loved Ted after her own fashion. But the love of acting burned hotter in her veins. She played the part well. It was

not insincerity; it was just what Ted called it—sportsmanship. She simply would not leave him until hard times had left first.

Ted was bubbling on, although she did not listen:

"Now we can start making the house over to the Monterey adobe you designed. We'll make a hacienda out of the ranch, like the ones in the old Spanish California days. It's what you dreamed about. I can afford to cut down some of the orange trees now for the palm driveway you sketched. It'll take years, because everything's got to look natural and old. But the longer it takes, the better. A girl like you wants to do things, plan things, have a career. I know all about it. I'm not blind. It'll give you your lifework. You and I will work together. Gosh, we'll have fun!"

But Vera went in to get out her clothes and pack her suitcase. She would tell him after dinner, when he was not so

# DIVINE

*fire*

*The story of a girl  
who rekindled an old  
love with a torch*

*By*  
**KENNETH  
PERKINS**



elated about that imaginary heaven.

In selecting her clothes she came across an old dress she had worn for the charades at the Women's Club a week ago. It had, in a way, sharpened the conflict in her life. It was a faded, flounced gown with box-pleated peplum and smelling of lavender, bruised rosemary, musk, and moth balls. It had kindled her love for wearing old costumes and escaping from her life. The scent vividly evoked the wardrobes of Universal City. But it had effected something more serious. Other wives, who helped their husbands in their ranch work, had smirked and made remarks. It got back to Vera's ears that the gown "did not fit." It had belonged to Ted's grandmother, who fought Indians on the Mormon Trail, who helped plant the first grove in the valley, who was a great old-timer, a ranch wife who had crossed and conquered the prairies. Vera, in wearing that mantle of frontier heroism, was assuming a dignity beyond her measure. She had been in the pictures, then fallen in love with a young rancher. She was a misfit.

**T**ED came in when she had a selection of dresses, stockings, and lingerie spread on the bed. She would have to tell him now, and explain that these things on the bed were to be packed in a suitcase preparatory for her return to the world where she belonged. She rather wished she had gotten the suitcase down from the cupboard closet, so that the whole stark truth would be displayed in tangible symbols before his eyes. Mere words would be crabbed.

It so happened that Ted did not consider this display of finery on the bed as anything suspicious. She was always doing something or other with her clothes. She had little else to do on that ranch.

"I just wanted to tell you," he said, "that Pikey phoned there may be a big drop tonight. We might have to smudge. You'd better sleep in the middle room, where the smoke won't bother you." His eyes clung a moment to the things on the bed, for their beauty delighted him. "And if I were you I'd put those clothes in the same room. Smudge would ruin them. I've put weather stripping on the windows for you—"

"Yes, I—I—" Vera found herself stammering. "Ted, it was dear of you to do that. I'm ashamed of what a wife I've been. Other ranch wives stay up to help their husbands on smudge nights, but you always let me sleep through it all. And the weather stripping—you won't even let the smoke bother me—when I really should be helping. I don't think I'll ever make the right kind of wife for you, Ted. That's why I—"

"Nonsense. I'll help you with these things. The smoke oozes in. You really ought to pack the stuff away in a trunk."

"But I was going to use it," she faltered.

"Then dump it in a suitcase just for

tonight. Here; I'll get one down for you."

She bit her lip as he got the suitcase from the closet. "It's got to be now or never," she was saying, her lips almost moving. "I've got to go through with it. But I can't tell him. I simply can't! I'll leave a note. I can't tell him and just say good-by. It would be like stabbing him."

**S**HE was out on the road two hours later. He had gone to bed early to get some sleep in case he had to smudge. The note she had pinned on the pillow said all there was to be said: She had found their life on the grove killing her. She had to have her career, just as he had his. Having such a passion for his grove, he would understand what that meant. She was leaving him. And she was not coming back.

Her plan now was to go to the mountains, where one of the directors was

giving a week-end party. Vera and Ted had been invited, but Ted, as usual, refused to leave his grove for overnight.

**S**HE got a livelier piece on the radio. With the sudden squawk of rollicking music, she unconsciously drove faster. It was glorious, the car roaring past groves that spread up in endless geometrical patterns toward the jumble of the sierras. The moonlit sky, scoured by the norther of every shred of cloud or mist, was as bright as day. She yearned to reach those dazzling bits of snow-covered crags. To get to them meant more than her plans for getting back to the pictures. She wanted to ride higher.

The smell of the groves gave way to the wild, pure air of pepperwoods and cedars, and then of pines. She wanted to race madly all night, to keep going on and on. She swung higher toward the source of that great flood of light, until San Bernardino and the valley towns





*The display of clothes on the bed didn't arouse Ted's suspicions. "I can't tell him I'm going," she thought, "I'll leave a note . . ."*

were like a scattering of fallen stars.

It occurred to her that she had forgotten the more prosaic necessities of this mountain flight—gas and water. It would be awkward if the car failed her. She was not used to walking very far. Besides, it would ruin her slippers. She liked riding horses or swimming or tennis, but one walk across the clouds of their grove had made her feet throb with agony. The windbreaks of the grove were the horizon to her world, a horizon she never explored.

This was what she thought for the next few miles before she reached a service station. The air, thinner and colder every minute, was filling her with a reckless ecstasy. She had wings, all of a sudden. Here was air! She flew and skimmed and soared. Ted was in the long, dark past. He was far away down there where the crazy quilt of groves tipped off toward the blue bottoms.

She swerved into the gas station, and

in the moment's wait she heard a voice. From the tiny office a radio blared full tilt:

"Covina, Redlands, all ranchers take warning. Big drop predicted if the wind dies. Redlands 26, Pomona 25, Riverside 24."

WOULD that voice follow her all night? She turned her own radio to its loudest, fighting the voice with the dance rhythms of Coconut Grove. In time with the latter her slipper tapped softly at the floor board. But the other voice, without melody or rhythm, lighted a picture in her mind. It was a vision of her husband distracted, watching the wind, getting out his old clothes and boots, filling his torches to light the smudge fires down in the grove. She saw him wandering alone and fearful through his trees. The perpetual fear of losing his grove would ride him hard tonight. He would not get another wink of sleep till sunup,

perhaps not then. He would be crazy.

And Vera would be up at that mountain party, dancing.


Her slipped foot tapped no longer in time to the orchestra. It thumped, following the slower cadence, which was really no cadence at all, but an intonation and a voice pleading to her.

Other ranch wives would be up with their frantic husbands. She remembered how other women looked after staying up all night, making coffee for the Mexicans, answering the incessant ringing of the telephone. In the morning they were wilted and worn, sullied with smoke, ringed about the eyes, mustached at the mouth. Imagine Ted letting that happen to his wife!

She drove out of the station, her foot fidgeting on the accelerator. Given too little gas, the car chugged. The dance, which was all she could hear now as the filling station radio died in the distance, was a catchy, (Continued on page 120)

THIS REVEALING FATHER-AND-SON STORY IS ANOTHER CROSS SECTION SLICED FROM REAL LIFE BY A GREAT NOVELIST

*Maurice's fists were clenched, his eyes glared at his father. "It's my train! You said it was! Why shouldn't I play with it?"*

 MAURICE BLAKE, age a little more than ten, thought that there was nothing very strange in not having a mother. Other boys, he knew (but he did not know very many), had mothers and talked about them a good deal. Because Maurice didn't have one, they were fond of telling him how marvelous their mothers were. So Maurice, who had learned by this time to think for himself because he was so much alone, had long ago decided that mothers were a hindrance rather than a benefit. His mother, in fact, had died a year after his birth, and since he was seven his home had been in a large, dark house off Gramercy Park, which consisted almost entirely of big stone staircases and rooms so high that it hurt you to look at the ceiling.

His father wrote for the newspapers, and wrote so well and so brilliantly that he was in constant demand and almost always away from the big house. His father was rich and Maurice had everything that a boy could want, including Miss Brent, the governess, Mrs. Howard, the housekeeper, and Mrs. Howard's little girl, Lucy.

He hadn't gone to school as yet, because his father moved about the world so swiftly that he had no time to be



ILLUSTRATED BY  
SEYMOUR BALL

definite about the kind of school that Maurice should go to. He was a big, broad man, with a brown mustache, bright, lively eyes, a booming voice, and he smelled, as Maurice well knew, of tobacco, shaving soap, and an especial kind of heathery scent, which last, Maurice was told, came from Scotland. On his brief visits to his home Mr. Blake, Sr., rushed about the big house, shouting at the top of his voice, and everybody rushed about with him. On these occasions the house was filled with people. There were lights and flowers and beautiful cars outside the door, and extra servants, and Maurice could have anything that he wished.

He did not want very much, and his great aim in life was to be with his father alone. There was no one, of course, in the whole world as magnificent as his father. Not only was he splendid in himself, but his picture was constantly in the newspapers, and everyone admired him tremendously, especially ladies.

But, as Maurice often heard him say, the great thing was his splendid little boy. Where, he asked the many ladies, could you find a grander little boy, a wiser, a handsomer, a more perfectly behaved? And his father would shout out all these things, his eyes sparkling, his mouth laughing, and he would pick up Maurice in his strong arms and swing him in the air, and his sharp mustache, which was almost like a knife, would brush Maurice's cheeks and eyes, and Maurice would swim delightedly in the tobacco and the shaving cream and the heather from Scotland. Oh, they were wonderful, these special moments! But the trouble was that there were always so many other people to share them as well.

MAURICE had in his mind a daring plan of creeping one morning very early down the stairs along the passage, down another short flight of stairs, and so into the room where he knew his father slept. He planned then to move with the utmost quietness across the floor and creep into the bed where his father was sleeping, and stay there waiting for his father to awake. This, indeed, he might one day have attempted, but most unwisely he confided his plan to Miss Brent, who was horrified at the idea.

"Oh, that would never do!" she cried in the sharp, shrill tones that were so



**BY HUGH  
WALPOLE**



like the striking of the big silver clock in the drawing-room. Miss Brent, who was long and thin like a beautifully rolled umbrella, had a perpetual smile that was full of brightness but no meaning. Maurice never trusted her smile. So now, when he asked why it was so horrible that he should creep into bed beside his father, Miss Brent murmured that of course he mustn't. "Your father wouldn't want to be awakened," Miss Brent explained. "He sleeps late."

"Oh, I wouldn't wake him," Maurice observed. "I'd be as quiet as anything."

"Now, that's enough of that," said Miss Brent sharply. "Don't you ever dare—"

Maurice thought that he might catch his father alone in his bath—surely he would not be sharing that with anybody else. For he could often hear his father's bath water running quite fiercely when he was in the middle of his lessons with Miss Brent. And he did, indeed, on one occasion, run for his life down the passage and push open the bathroom door. The room was filled with steam and a large, naked man was doing exercises, breathing deeply out of his nostrils and looking so completely unlike anything that Maurice believed his father to be, that he ran back to the schoolroom again with fear in his heart and a wonder as to whether he had ever seen his real father before.

There came a time then when his father was away for a very long while indeed, and Maurice found Miss Brent less than nothing of a companion. He was forbidden to go into the park around the corner from the house, and had, I'm afraid, the dulllest of dull existences, and sought companionship with Mrs. Howard's Lucy.

LUCY was a thin little girl with somewhat protruding, anxious eyes. She was pretty in a way, because she had pale flaxen hair and was always very neat. Her mother adored her. Mr. Howard, Lucy's father, had vanished one morning after eating a hearty breakfast, and gone off with a lady to South Africa. Mrs. Howard, whose second name was common sense, had washed up the breakfast things and before evening found a job as housekeeper with Mr. Blake. She'd been with him ever since and, so long as Lucy was well, was perfectly happy.

As her mother worshiped Lucy, so did Lucy worship Maurice. But she was a speechless child, unable always to express her feelings. She had been taught, of course, from the very earliest age, that she must never bother Mr. Maurice. But the boy was so often alone that he liked to go up to the room at the top of the house which was Mrs. Howard's sitting-room, and he would play with Lucy in a mild, quiet fashion, Mrs. Howard sitting in a chair sewing and wondering once in a while why the

two children were so quiet and "hadn't a bit of life between them."

Mrs. Howard was, however, immensely genteel and loved Lucy to be what she called ladylike. What she liked best was to brush Lucy's beautiful flaxen hair, which she did by the hour, her matter-of-fact, sensible eyes staring into the room, seeing, perhaps, the past with the figure of the wicked adventuress in the foreground, but much more likely soberly thinking of the present and wondering whether the new kitchen maid was up to any mischief and what she was going to have for dinner.

THERE was, however, for Maurice something comfortable and friendly about Mrs. Howard's room. The rest of the house was so large and so empty. He picked up somewhere a copy of *Bleak House*, and the illustrations therein of Chesney Wold with a gloomy avenue of trees, the marble statue at the corner of the stairs, the rays of sunshine breaking in through the latticed windows, all seemed to him very like his own home.

He lived, in fact, in a state of passionate desire for his father. Love, except with the aged, flourishes best through long absences. He'd never been with his father long enough to become accustomed to him. And there was something so heroic for Maurice in the vitality and high spirits of that large, broad-shouldered figure.

And then one day, without a moment's warning, he came back from his walk with Miss Brent in the park, to find two men meeting him on the stairs. Two very large men, they seemed to him, and behind them a stir of bustle, a sense of invading light, a richness of promise all about the house. Miss Brent fell back; Maurice took a step or two up the stairs and then stopped, staring.

The two men also stopped, and then both of them began to roar with laughter. The noise filled the whole place, like the roar of lions or tigers in the very heart of the jungle. One of the big men, quite the largest Maurice had ever seen, leaned forward and picked Maurice up, held him in the air, looking at him with warm, kindly eyes that beamed out of his great, rosy face. Maurice stayed there, between the two great hands, patiently without moving.

"This must be Maurice!" cried the great man. "Don't you know who we are? We are your Uncle Blair and your Uncle Stephen."

And the other man, who was not so big as the first one, but quite big enough, cried out, "I'm Uncle Stephen!"

Maurice was instantly reminded of Tweedledum and Tweedledee in *Alice in Wonderland*. But he liked the warmth and pressure of Uncle Blair's hands about him, the sense of strength, the promise of companionship. So he said nothing, but laughed and kicked a little with his legs. Uncle Blair then gathered him against his chest and carried him as

though he were a small Pekingese dog down into the hall; then he set him on his feet.

"You're a fine young man. Let's take a good look at you. My, you're swell! Surprised to see your old uncles? All the way from Alaska I am, and the other one is from California, where the sun never stops shining. A lot of other things happen there too—don't they, Stephen?" And he roared with laughter. "We've come to stay with your father a bit and stir this old house up. Aren't you glad we've come? Hasn't it been dull without us? You'll see how exciting it'll be."

All this and ever so much more poured out in a tumultuous flood. Yes, just as though it were really a river flooding the hall, sweeping into the dining-room, beating down the door that led into the servants' quarters, and with its swelling waters bringing such a force of life and energy that Maurice was almost breathless. The hall door opened, and there was his father, looking so smart and so fresh and, to Maurice, so wonderful. Maurice stood there looking at him, forgetting altogether his two uncles. It was so utterly unexpected. He was so happy.

"Hello, kid," said his father. "A bit of a surprise, isn't it?"

Maurice had been told by Mrs. Howard how to behave. He walked slowly forward. "Yes, Father," he said. "I hope you're quite well."

This seemed marvelously funny to his two uncles, who shouted with laughter and called out both together, "He hopes he's well! He hopes his father's well. Can you beat it!"

But his father bent forward, as he always did, and kissed Maurice first on one cheek and then on the other, and said, smiling, "Been a good boy? I hope so."

"Yes, Father."

"I must ask Miss Brent."

THEN Blake looked over his son's head to his two brothers. "How do you like your uncles? Ever see anyone so big in your life? Blair, you're a disgrace! You've got a stomach like an elephant's."

He walked past Maurice, put his hands on the shoulders of his brothers, and they all walked up the stairs together, all of them talking at once, while Maurice stood staring up after them, alone in the hall, the noise of the rushing waters still sounding in his ears.

Then came Miss Brent's sharp, tinkling voice: "Maurice! Maurice! Where are you? Come and take your coat off at once!"

"Yes, Miss Brent."

He gave a little sigh. Would he ever be alone with his father, even for a moment? Still, it was rather exciting to have two new uncles. Perhaps something was going to happen. He felt in his heart that it was.

What happened, in the first place, was the wonderful (Continued on page 116)

*Finer and more delicious in flavor*

# Better

## than ever before!

Everywhere women are telling other women that Campbell's Soups now taste even better than before. Frankly, these soups are better than ever. Campbell's Soup chefs have developed even a finer flavor, an added richness, combined with certain other improvements that make these new delights in fine home-quality soup.



*Campbell's*

### CHICKEN SOUP

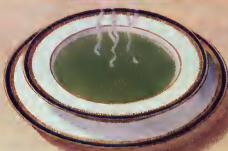
Think of the finest chicken soup you ever tasted anywhere and you will be thinking of Campbell's Chicken Soup. Now it has even more chicken—all the good meat of plump tender chickens, in a rich yellow chicken broth, recalling "company dinner" at some cozy farmhouse.



*Campbell's*

### Cream of MUSHROOM SOUP

More mushrooms... fine fresh cultivated ones... combined with rich sweet cream, and added to this a garnish of generous portions of tender mushrooms, make this the best Cream of Mushroom Soup you ever tasted.



*Campbell's*

### PEA SOUP

A richer purée marks this famous soup, combining sweet tender young peas, fine table butter, just the right seasoning, in a soup that is more tempting and delightful than ever. You will like it either made with water, or as Cream of Pea (made with milk).



*Campbell's*

### CONSOMMÉ

Extra richness, extra strength, extra flavor mark this Consommé. This amber-clear broth has even more beef flavor... the essence of rich prime beef, slowly simmered... plus the goodness of celery, parsley and carrots



*Campbell's*

### VEGETABLE SOUP

If it has been some time since you've tasted this soup there's a new treat waiting for you. It has a richer beef stock now, a more pronounced beef flavor and is brimful with the appeal-to-hunger of 15 fine garden vegetables—truly "a meal in itself."

*Soups that you should serve more often*

**DEEP INTO THE WOODS.**  
No luxuries here, as "Herb" Welch — famous Maine Guide — makes noon camp. Hearty outdoor appetites welcome the sense of digestive well-being that smoking Camels encourages. As "Herb" says: "I've lived on dried meat and I've dined on the best—but no matter what I'm eating, it always tastes better and digests better when I smoke Camels."



**WHEREVER...  
WHATEVER...  
WHENEVER  
YOU EAT—**

*For Digestion's Sake...  
Smoke Camels!*



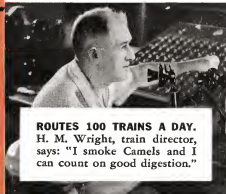
*Costlier Tobacco*

**Camels are made from finer,  
MORE EXPENSIVE TOBACCOS  
...Turkish and Domestic...  
than any other popular brand.**

Smoking Camels encourages a proper flow of digestive fluids...increases alkalinity...brings a sense of well-being

**YOU** eat over a thousand meals a year! Food is varied. Place and time often differ. Yet, thanks to Camels, you can help digestion meet these changing conditions easily. Smoking Camels speeds up the flow of digestive fluids. Tension eases. Alkalinity in-

creases. You enjoy your food—and have a feeling of ease and contentment after eating. Mealtime or *anytime*—make it Camels—for digestion's sake, for Camel's invigorating "lift," for mildness and fine flavor. Camels do not get on your nerves.



**ROUTES 100 TRAINS A DAY.**  
H. M. Wright, train director, says: "I smoke Camels and I can count on good digestion."




**GLIDER CHAMPION.** Mrs. D. Holderman says: "A few Camels, and I eat with relish and feel cheery and at ease afterward."

# TRIPLE Mirror

## BY CHANNING POLLOCK



Did you ever take a three-way look at yourself?  
Here the dean of American playwrights tells  
of surprising things he saw. A modern parable

 IT WAS dark in the room and yet, somehow, I could see the intruder plainly.

He was a tall, awkward youth, in cheap clothing that fitted him badly, and he had seated himself at the foot of my bed before I noticed him. "Do you remember me?" he asked diffidently.

"Of course," I answered. "You haven't changed a bit."

"How could I?" he said. "But you've changed. If we'd met on the street I'm not sure I should have recognized you."

There was disappointment and disapproval in his tone, oddly blended with a certain awe and respect. I saw him looking at my luxurious lounge chair and at the silver and ebony stuff on my dresser. "You couldn't afford that," I thought, with a curious tenderness. He was so young, this boy, and he'd had a hard time of it. He made me feel wise and old, and at once envious and sorry for him.

"I couldn't afford this," he admitted, as though he'd been reading my mind. "I shouldn't want it, anyway. Things like that belong to the idle rich. I don't want to be rich. I want to be great. I want to go on writing books no one will publish. Some day they'll be published, and then the whole world will ring with praise of me."

"That's a long road," I observed, "with nothing much at the end of it. I

grew tired. I found there were short cuts and pleasanter goals."

"There are no short cuts to fame," said The Boy I Was.

The Man I Am smiled at him.

"How naive you are! Study what people want, instead of ignoring it, and give them exactly that. Never anything higher or finer. And keep your mind on your business. I had two critics for dinner tonight, and my publisher. We had grilled trout with potatoes *persillade* and *Montrahet*."

"Surely, they won't like your work better for that."

"You'd be surprised," I said.

"Then why do you care what they think?"

"I don't care, but everyone else does," I explained. "Each of those two fellows reaches millions of people and makes up their minds for them. There's no surer way of winning that fame you talk about."

"That *isn't* the fame I talk about," protested my visitor. "That *isn't* enduring fame."

"Who knows or cares?" I hammered back at him. He had made me feel cheap for a moment, and I resented it. "You might have altered the paths of the stars, but it's my autograph they'll want if I've told a joke or two on the radio. What your greatness would earn in a lifetime I can get in a week in Holly-

wood. Go back to your little hall room, my friend. Nothing you say or are can make me ashamed of what I am."

I turned my back to him abruptly and went on staring at the wall of my bedroom. I might even have dropped off to sleep at last, but for a strange, far-away sound all around me. It was the sound of a human voice—the most human I've ever heard—the warmest and yet the coolest and calmest and most dispassionate.

"Do you remember me?" the second comer inquired, as the first had done.

He was the biggest man I had ever seen and the most erect. For the life of me I couldn't think how he got into the room. He was older than the boy or I, but younger, too, and the light in his eyes was brighter than that I had seen in the boy's, only softer. How he was dressed, I can't say. It didn't matter. "Some of you seems oddly familiar," I thought, "and some of you doesn't."

"You've grown," the boy remarked. "I've a picture of you that I carry with me, but it isn't like you."

I recalled that I once had the picture, too, but had mislaid it.

"Are you The Man I Wanted To Be?" I asked.

"I was," my second visitor replied, "but I went on from there. I learned by your mistakes. I mounted to heights you couldn't see. No one who gets that far can stand still. He grows dizzy and falls or clear-sighted and climbs on."

"To find gold?" I inquired.

"To find fame," said the boy.

"To find *himself*," the man answered.

"When you've done that, success and failure seem very little things. What others think of you, say of you, even do to you, disturbs you no longer. Children are afraid of losing their toys, but that which lies within you cannot be lost. To work, to see, to know and understand—this only is happiness. No one is great who has striven for greatness, and no one is rich to whom riches matter."

**W**HO are the great, then?" the boy asked.

"Those who make the world better."

"Stuff and nonsense!" I exclaimed.

"The world doesn't want to be made better. It jeers at the men who try that, and, if they persevere, it kills them."

"They are the only men it can not kill," my visitor said quietly.

There was a peculiar light in the room—a new light. The boy's face shone in it. "Show me the way!" he cried.

The Man I Wanted To Be crossed my chamber and disappeared from my sight. After him went The Boy I Was. Where they went, and how, I shall never know. In the heavy darkness that had fallen again I tried to follow, stumbling against the furniture and tripping over my heavy Oriental rugs. When I came to the door it wouldn't open; I had locked myself in and the key was missing. Could I find another key?



## THE PERFECT

(Continued from page 31)

after service with the A.E.F. he considered himself overweight, and took lessons in tap dancing to reduce. He liked dancing, got a job as chorus boy in Earl Carroll's *Vanities*, rose to assistant dance director, and then struck out for himself.

In 1925 he got the idea of a troupe of highly trained tap and acrobatic dancers which would put line-up dancing on a new level. The Tiller girls, of London, had been the first to do this, and people said that American girls would never succeed in the same way, being too individual to work together. Markert got sixteen girls, trained them, called them the Rockettes, and very soon had them dancing in the Roxy Theater.

From the beginning they were a sensation, and soon Roxy—the late S. L. Rothafel—rechristened them the Roxyettes. Their number was increased, their fame spread, and they became the best-known portion of the stage shows. They went to the Muske Hall when it opened, were again rechristened—this time the Rockettes—and continued to add to their laurels.

THERE are forty-six of them altogether, although only thirty-six appear on the stage. The other ten are always on vacation. They work every day for three weeks, then get a week off. One of their number, Emily Sherman, acts as captain. She does not dance in the line-up, but learns all the routines, helps to teach the other girls, and fills in whenever there is an unavoidable absence. She also looks after the pay roll, sees that the girls get to places on time, listens to their complaints and troubles, and acts as professional mother.

They work a twelve-hour day, from about 10 A. M. to 10:15 P. M., when the last of their four daily shows is over. On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday they rehearse between shows for the new show, which begins on Thursday. Between shows on the remaining four days of the week they are free to go shopping, take sun baths on the roof, read, knit, crochet, listen to the radio, or otherwise amuse themselves.

They are not, as a group, facially beautiful. Markert found out that beauty and the kind of dancing ability he requires do not often come in the same package. He also found that make-up and distance from the audience smooth out imperfections of face, but that nothing takes away a misstep or a leg out of line. So the girls, first of all, must be good dancers.

Next they must be good troupers; that

is, they must work together for the sake of the group, not for their individual selves. One girl with a personal ambition or one girl with a grudge against another could ruin the whole troupe. Each is dependent on the others, and the chain of thirty-six is only as strong as its weakest member.

Markert likes them about 5 feet 5 inches tall and about 118 pounds in weight. He doesn't object to good looks, naturally, but at present only about a dozen of the troupe could qualify for beauty, whereas all of them are fine dancers. They aren't required to diet or keep certain hours or do setting-up exercises. Their work keeps them healthy and their youth supplies boundless energy.

Their rehearsal work goes on in two large halls, one equipped with a long mirror running from the floor to a height of six feet. In this the girls can observe themselves and correct any flaws, since they cannot see themselves ordinarily while dancing. Gene Snyder, Markert's assistant, puts them through their paces, with Captain Sherman helping out. The dances, though they seem intricate and difficult to the average observer, contain usually the standard steps which all the girls know. The routine itself is what must be rehearsed again and again, until all thirty-six move through it with the timing of a combustion motor and the grace of a swan.

THE Rockettes have been almost everything in their stage life: sailors, soldiers, policemen, waiters, chauffeurs, cadets; Cossacks, Cubans, Chinamen, caballeros, Arabs, Afghans—an endless list.

But, whatever they are, they eventually march upstage, arms around each other's waists, kicking to right and left, in a line as straight as a rule could draw. This is the big moment for the audience, when honest men and women make the welkin ring for seventy-two slim white legs that move as one.

The girls know this is their big moment, and they await the applause smiling and expectant. It is one of the things which sends them forth from the theater each night with head high and body poised.

Most of their time, except for vacation weeks, is spent backstage. They wander about in lounging pajamas and slacks, now and then dressing up to go shopping. There are lots of things to do besides rehearse—costume fittings take time, and many of the girls sneak off to do private exercise for certain steps they are not sure about. The last show is over at about 10:15 in the evening, and their boy friends are allowed to wait for them in the lounge.

They receive \$48 a week for their work. This, on the surface, does not seem much, but they receive it 52 weeks a year. The average actor or actress in New York works only two or three weeks a year. Thus an unusually fortunate actress, getting a salary of \$500 a week, may make less than a Rockette in the course of a year.

The Rockettes know this and they appreciate their status. They do not consider themselves chorus girls, and they are not. They are precision dancers, highly trained and highly skillful, and once they get into the troupe only marriage or illness takes them away, and some stay on after marriage. Often there is not a vacancy for a year, though sometimes there are several.

Those who wish to join the troupe have a hard road to travel. If they pass the

rigid dancing test which admits them—and of 125 aspirants recently only four were accepted—their names go on the waiting list. Suppose a girl is sixteenth on the list. It may be years before her chance comes, and years, when youth is a required asset, are important. Yet a dozen or more try out every week.

JUST who are these girls? I knew I couldn't attempt to interview each one individually, so I suggested to Captain Sherman that a questionnaire be submitted to them, a questionnaire which would tell me where they came from, what they do, what they think about, and where, eventually, they are going.

"Sure," said the amiable captain, brushing her black hair from a damp brow. "Send it along."

So I wrote down all the questions I could think of. I figured that if the answers to these questions made a certain pattern, recognizable as typically American, my thesis would be proved—that the Rockettes personify the American girl.

The answers were even better than I expected. Of the 46 I was able to corner 40, and here's their testimony:

First, all the Rockettes were born in America (with a quick bow to Toronto, Canada, for Rheta Stone), in 17 states and 34 towns and cities: New York, Chicago, St. Louis, Louisville, Philadelphia, Brooklyn, Providence, Seattle, and points north, east, south, and west—Florida, Ohio, New Jersey, Nebraska, Michigan, Massachusetts, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Iowa, and New York. Most of their parents were born in the United States, too, and the mixtures are typical of democracy: French-Irish, German-English, Swiss-Austrian, Dutch-English, and so on.

Of the 40, only 14 are blondes. Brown hair crowns 21 of the heads, 3 have black tresses, and 2 are redheads. Half of them, just 20, have blue eyes; 13 have brown eyes; 4 have gray; and 3 have hazel. All but 10 are neither engaged nor married, but—26 of these 30 live with their families, parents, or mothers, in and around New York. Of the remaining 10, 6 are married and 4 are engaged to be married.

The average Rockette, the ideal mixture of the 40, is 5 feet 4 inches tall, weighs 114 pounds, has brown hair and blue eyes, is a graduate of some high school, lives with her parents or mother, and is neither engaged nor married. She is 22 years old, having been born the year the World War began. She prefers men in this order: intelligent, ambitious, neat, thoughtful. She would also like him to have a sense of humor and be tall and handsome.

Her ambition is to travel around the world, and especially to see Hawaii and the South Seas. Secondly, she would like a business of her own and a home in the country. She does not, of course, consider her job as Rockette a permanent career, since it demands eternal youth. A few Rockettes would like to be singers or actresses, and one each would like the following—a career in Hollywood, a dog kennel, a golf championship, a job as interior decorator, a career in portrait painting, a life of study, a career as a good wife, and, oddly enough, happiness.

The Rockettes' favorite screen stars are Fredric March and Irene Dunne. Miss Dunne "has everything . . . she is beautiful, can act, and (Continued on page 64)



# "Don't worry about me—it's just a Cold"



*Just a cold now—but it may lead to influenza or pneumonia which, on an average, cause 125,000 deaths each year in the United States. About half of these deaths occur in December, January, February and March.*

THE common cold is bad enough in itself. But the real danger is that it may blaze the trail for more serious diseases or reduce your resistance to their attacks.

Before you realize it, what you think is just a "cold" may develop into influenza or even pneumonia. Don't forget that pneumonia may also start suddenly, even without a cold.

The first symptoms of pneumonia are usually chilliness or a severe chill, pain in the chest or side, headache, cough, and fever. Such symptoms mean that not a second should be lost. Go to bed and send for your doctor. Remember that pneumonia is a communicable disease. Proper nursing, complete rest and reasonable isolation are absolutely essential.

Lobar pneumonia is caused by many different types of the pneumonia germ—but each type is specific and can be identified. Should anyone in your family have pneumonia, your doctor will probably arrange for an immediate laboratory examination of the sputum to determine which type of pneumonia is present.

Serums are available which are highly effective in

treating certain of the types. Not all cases of pneumonia should have serum treatment. Your doctor will decide.

Pneumonia is a serious infection, but with the increasing defenses, medical scientists hope to reduce its heavy toll. During the next four months it will do the most damage to those who are not on guard. If your physical resistance is lowered by overwork or unusual fatigue, too little sleep, overindulgence in food or drink, or exposure to cold and wet, pneumonia germs may gain quick headway.

At this time of the year it is a wise precaution to have your doctor look you over very carefully to see whether or not you have diseased tonsils, sinuses, adenoids, teeth or other physical impairments which may lower resistance.

You will be much safer during the coming winter months if you keep your vitality high.

Send for the Metropolitan's booklet, "Colds, Influenza, Pneumonia," which contains valuable information about the prevention and care of these diseases. Address Booklet Department 1236-A.



**Keep Healthy—Be Examined Regularly**

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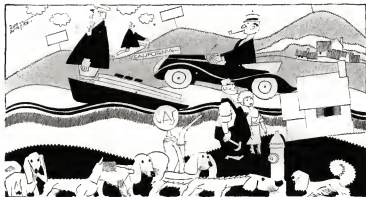
FREDERICK H. ECKER, Chairman of the Board

ONE MADISON AVE., NEW YORK, N. Y.

LEREOY A. LINCOLN, President

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# It takes ALL KINDS



DRAWING BY RUSSELL PATTERSON

## BY ALBERT BENJAMIN

**BURT KING**, 94, of Blair, Nebr., recently gave his annual aquatic exhibition for his 20 grandchildren. Among his dives were the jackknife, half turn, whole turn, double turn, one and a half back somersault, and cutaway.

**GILBERT LARSON**, Clinton, Wis., musician, has constructed a special violin bow which contains a clock spring attached to the lower jaw and the string. The spring yields to pressure on the bow and makes possible softer tones.

**MAJOR WILLIAM LONG**, London, England, plans to spend the rest of his life on the ocean and has booked a permanent passage on a liner engaged in the London-Australia service.

**MARIE KELLER**, 9, of Marseilles, Ill., is the only "Siamese" twin known to have survived an operation separating a pair.

**JOHN W. FREEMAN**, Laredo, Texas, scissors grinder, has just cashed a \$1,000 award for heroism made him 28 years ago by the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission when he rescued a young woman from a runaway horse. He had been saving it until he was in need.

**MR. AND MRS. B. F. TUCKER**, of Santa Ana, Calif., have a hummingbird sanctuary which nearly 1,000 pairs of hummingbirds make their seasonal headquarters.

**JOHN C. UNGER**, 48, Hugo, Colo., mathematics teacher, recently received a doctorate of philosophy from the University of Colorado, after 29 consecutive summers of attendance.

**MISS GEORGIA ENGELHARD**, of New York, N. Y., recently set a new record by scaling in one day three peaks in the Canadian Rockies—Mount Victoria, 11,355 feet; Mount Collier, 10,150 feet; and Pope's Peak, 10,376 feet.

**MR. AND MRS. HUGH HOLLEY**, Hammondsport, N. Y., have built a two-room cabin out of orange crates.

FOR a number of years Charles H. Foltz, 89, of Barre, Mass., has driven his car from coast to coast and return, annually.

**R. K. BLAKELY**, 60-year-old ice dealer of Evansville, Ind., has undertaken to put a Bible in every Evansville home, spending three hours daily at the task.

**BORN** at the height of a dust storm, the infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Noah O'Hair, of Laverne, Okla., has been named Dusty Weather.

**ALFRED W. JONES**, managing clerk of the New York State Law Department, has, in the last 20 years, accepted 500,000 summonses to appear in court on behalf of the people of the state.

**SYLVESTER PLUMLEE**, 63, Olney, Ill., believes in the horse and buggy as an aid to courtship, having recently won his tenth wife in 38 years by their use.

**MR. AND MRS. RAYMOND MURRAY JUDD**, of Honolulu, T. H., have named their young son Kananiohoheakua-homeopuukaimanaloiohiohiokeaweaweaumakaakalani Judd, which is Hawaiian for "The-beautiful-srom-of-my-home-sparkling-diamond-hill-is-carried-to-the-eyes-of-heaven."

**FRED K. MASSENGALE**, Terrell, Texas, postmaster, has compiled the history and meaning of the name of every post office in Texas.

**BEN PRESTON**, Wichita, Kans., mechanic, has constructed an automobile out of parts taken from 25 cars that were smashed in accidents costing 37 human lives.

**HELEN COLBY**, Frankfurt, Ind., bookkeeper, has crocheted a bedspread out of crepe paper. It contains over 300 blocks, each four inches square, and no two blocks are alike.

**FRED SCHARNWEBER**, of Danbury, Conn., has established a dogs' rest room at his filling station. It is equipped with an imitation fire hydrant and other accessories.

**DEXTER HANEY**, Lone Rock, Wis., milkman and amateur photographer, issues milk tickets that carry photographs of local residents and village scenes.

★ Do you know an unusual fact that will fit into this column? We will pay \$1 for each acceptable item accompanied by corroborative proof. Address IT TAKES ALL KINDS, The American Magazine, 250 Park Ave., New York, N. Y. No entries will be returned.

(Continued from page 62) is a good singer." Leslie Howard and Helen Hayes are the favorite stage pair.

The favorite books in the dressing-rooms of late have been *Anthony Adverse*, *The Romance of Leonardo da Vinci*, and *Century Readings in English Literature*. All the Rockettes liked *Mutiny on the Bounty* best of last year's movies, and they would rather read about Helen Wills Moody than any other figure in sports. When they turn on the radio they listen to Jack Benny.

"That settles it," I said. "They are Americans, typical, average, and ideal."

Then I added up the votes for honors in the troupe—for Prettiest, Wittiest, Best Dressed, Most Popular, Most Likely to Become a Star, Most Romantic, Most Studious, Best Dancer, Best Mimic, Quickest Costume Changer, and Practical Joker.

When I presented myself again to Captain Sherman I showed her the results.

"If I could talk to these honor girls," I said. "I could . . ."

"Sure," she said. "They're going on in a few minutes. We'll go down and watch them from the wings and then get them into the cafeteria for lunch."

ON THE stage the Rockettes went through their routine and started the march upstage. I looked the line over, straight as any that ever marched across the parade ground of West Point. When the applause ended and the curtain came down I followed Captain Sherman through devious passageways and into an elevator. Down we went, to the last basement stop, and then along more passageways to the cafeteria.

"You sit down there," Captain Sherman said, pointing to a long table. "I'll bring them over."

I sat down, and she began singling out girls at the counter and pointing toward me. They would look at me, frown, and say something to Captain Sherman. Suddenly I became frightened. Nothing like this had ever happened to me before.

They moved toward me in a mass, carefully, as people approach strange animals which have strayed into their bedrooms. Captain Sherman introduced them. They bowed and slid into places. I gulped and sat down. After swallowing twice I dared to look at the girl on my left.

"Who are you?" I whispered.

"I'm Jean Eckler," she said.

I was even more frightened. This was the girl who was selected almost unanimously in my questionnaire as the Rockette Most Likely to Become a Star. She was brown-haired, slim, and very young.

"I'm scared," I said. "I don't know what to ask."

"We're scared too," she said. "We're afraid of what you'll ask."

I looked cautiously around the table. All eyes were on plates, all conversation was guarded and low. Now and then glances were shot toward me.

"This is awful," I said to Miss Eckler. "Tell me who they are again. I don't remember."

She leaned toward me and spoke in a low voice. "Next to me is Muriel Le Count, the Most Popular." I saw a demure, very lovely brunette with long ashes and a classic profile, opening her red mouth and putting the end of a sandwich into it.

"She's so popular because she is quiet



*Laugh follows laugh* as EDDIE CANTOR quips his way through the Texaco program. A final barrage of puns . . . and Eddie and his stooges say "Good-bye" until another Sunday. Then . . . quicker than you can say "Parkyakarkus" . . . a flick of your fingers twirls the Philco Automatic Tuning Dial to another station for a rapid-fire review of the news. No need to wait to hear if you are sharply tuned. Your Philco is not only tuned automatically . . . but it is tuned with absolute precision. A great convenience . . . and a great aid toward insuring complete enjoyment of Philco High-Fidelity reception which reproduces the full range of tones *and overtones* that make voices and instruments thrillingly true to life. Foreign tuning has been made simpler, too. On the 1937 Philco Spread-Band Dial of the Philco Foreign Tuning System . . . London, Paris, Rome and other overseas stations are named, located, spread six times farther apart to assure freedom from interference and more dependable reception.



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and good-natured. Nobody has ever caught her out of temper. Honestly, she'd come to rehearsal at three in the morning and never complain. Her family is that way, too. They're very devoted. Her father or brother calls for her every night.

"The next girl is Peggy Todd, our Quickest Costume Changer." I wrenched my eyes away from Miss LeCount to look at a small, animated blonde.

"She lives in Kearny, New Jersey, with her family and she is always catching a train. She seems to be always in a hurry, and she can change a costume faster than I can adjust a shoulder strap.

"The next girl is Rheta Stone. She's our Practical Joker and Best Mimic—two honors for one girl. See you looking at her. Watch her blush."

**I**N AMAZEMENT I saw a tall blonde turn deep crimson under my gaze.

"That's how she gets away with it. She slips flat pans of water under the covers of our seats—we call it the wet seat—and when we accuse her she blushes just like that. It's funny, isn't it? She can mimic anybody or anything, and she blushes the same way if she's caught.

"That girl next to her is Betty Sasscier, one of our brunettes. She's our Best Dancer and Most Romantic. Sassy is very romantic. She's scared stiff of men; won't go near them. She never has a date and she lives way over in Brooklyn with her family. She reads poetry and Shakespeare and she thinks Leslie Howard is grand. Know what? She met Robert Taylor last week and she still likes Leslie Howard best.

"The next two girls are our Most Studious, Evelyn Lauper and Emmy Lou Petri. They sit together over in the corner and they have a whole library there. Laupy is always reading and Emmy Lou is an artist. She studied in Paris and at the Art Students' League. She does woodcuts and etchings and oil portraits. She wants to make a career out of it some day."

"How about your career?" I asked. "I'm studying singing—I'm a lyric soprano. I'd like musical-comedy work, but you know how hard it is to get started. Perhaps radio would be a beginning. I don't know."

She stopped suddenly and looked confused. Then she took up her tale of the other girls:

"Next is Charlotte Joslin, our Prettiest. Isn't she lovely? French-Irish, a good combination. We voted her prettiest for a woman's reason: She's lovely in the morning, in the afternoon, at night—with her make-up off or on. That's real beauty. Look at that skin. It's like cream."

Miss Joslin must have caught a word, for my eyes found her paralyzed, with her teeth in a sandwich.

"She lives with her family, on Long Island. That girl next to her is our Wittiest. She won't say anything while you're here, though. The next one is Florence Mallee, our best-dressed."

It was impossible to talk about Miss Mallee, a tall, handsome blonde, because she was sitting directly across from me and could hear every word. We decided to face it out. I asked her how she happened to be the best-dressed.

"Just a clothes horse," she said. "I'm big and tall. Get most of my clothes wholesale, because I wear a size 14—that's a sample size. Mother makes some of them. . . . Say, you aren't like other interviewers. They ask us about love and night clubs and all that nonsense."

"Love isn't nonsense," muttered Miss Sasscier.

"Of course it isn't," I said, grabbing the opening. "You're going to be a dancer, aren't you?"

"THERE is no future in dancing nowadays," Miss Mallee said flatly. "There is something rotten in the state of the dance world. I was reading *Hamlet* last night and I laughed when I found that quotation: 'There is something rotten in the state of Denmark.' I use it all the time, and there it is in Shakespeare."

"Shakespeare was a modernist," said Miss Petri. "Modernism as it is interpreted nowadays is incompetence. People use it to excuse their inabilities. Rembrandt was a real modernist. Every painting, with him, was an experiment in technique. He never painted two canvases the same way."

"Chaucer was a modernist, also," said

Miss Lauper. "He had the courage to shake off the domination of a foreign language, French, which had been imposed on the English, and use the tongue of the common people."

"We are modernists, too," Miss Eckler put in. "These dances we do have never been done before. They are American. Some day they will be traditional and old-fashioned."

"Time," said Miss Mallee, "is too much for us. Look at clothes. They pass out of fashion before you can get any wear out of them."

"And what is a face," said Miss Joslin, "but a twelve-year mask—from eighteen to thirty."

**I** SAT back in my chair and tried to convince myself that I was listening to the Rockettes. They might have been a group of graduate students in a university, talking of life and love and literature.

They gave me, as I sat there, a picture of American youth I had not before encountered. Here were a dozen nationalities, blended after generations into lovely, shapely American girls, alike in habits and ambitions and intellectual interests—happy, healthy, full of love of life and all things living.

I could have stayed there indefinitely, talking about horseback-riding, swimming, hockey, Goethe, Toscanini, Shakespeare, Paris clothes, Leslie Howard, Hawaii, books, poetry, and their selves and my self. But they were only relaxing. Presently Captain Sherman hustled them off. I tramped along behind with Miss Eckler. I felt that I knew why she had been voted the most likely to become a star. She had the personality for stage success—something that came out of her without effort and made an aura of pleasantness. I followed her right into the elevator like a sheep, and the door closed.

They all laughed. "Where do you think you're going?" Miss Sasscier asked.

"I haven't the slightest idea," I said, "but it's all right."

"Sorry," the elevator boy said as he stopped the car and the girls got out. "This is No Man's Land—the dressing-rooms."

## A grin on the Ball

(Continued from page 49)

Coach Dorais, of the University of Detroit, said to his squad before the first contest, "Now, this is a game, and I want you to have a lot of fun. Enjoy practice and enjoy the games. I don't want any of you to get hurt, and if you want to leave the line-

up on Saturday feel free to trot over to the bench. If you're exhausted, or if you're hurt, remember I can't always spot it from where I sit. There are a lot of boys here who want to take your place."

Dorais reports that seven boys took themselves out during the season, and usually they'd drop beside him with: "It's hot out there today, Coach, and I'm all in;" or, "I turned my ankle and I can't start fast enough." If a boy took advantage of an offer like Dorais', he'd never be a regular, anyway.

There's a lot of clowning on the field in the heat of battle that the spectators can't see or hear. Tulane was playing Northwestern a few years back, and apparently the Tulane squad had been sold on the idea that the South was coming to grips again with the North. In the spirit of the almost forgotten Civil War, Tulane began calling

the Northwestern boys "Yanks." Tulane was playing a terrifically hard game of football. When the team blocked or tackled it was something to treasure among your souvenirs. But Northwestern had a big All-American guard named Red Woodworth, who was playing a whale of a game and enjoying it to the utmost. Civil War animosity made him laugh. Finally, when Tulane called time out, Woodworth jogged over and said, kiddingly:

"Listen: You aren't getting anywhere with this 'Yank' stuff. I'm the only guy on our team who ever took history."

Tulane forgot "Yanks" from then on. Out of the good feeling aroused by the new spirit in football has come a higher order of sportsmanship than I have ever known in the game. Just before Colgate played Iowa, I said to the squad:

"Now, as far as Colgate's concerned, the

# COLDS

go quicker when you do these two things:



## Sal Hepatica does BOTH!

"WHEN a cold comes your way," modern physicians will tell you, "you can often help throw it off more quickly by doing certain simple things." Here are two "first steps" to take:

- 1.—Cleanse the intestinal tract.
- 2.—Help Nature combat the acidity that frequently accompanies a cold.

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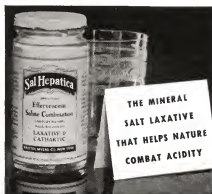
For not only does this mineral salt laxative cleanse the intestines—gently, thoroughly—but Sal Hepatica helps Nature combat acidity. In this

way Sal Hepatica aids your system to return to its normal alkalinity.

Ask your doctor—see if he doesn't stress the importance of taking both a laxative and an anti-acid in treating a cold.

### *Be modern—fight a cold the modern way*

So whenever a cold comes your way, take Sal Hepatica . . . two teaspoonfuls in a glass of water. In addition, get plenty of rest and quiet—go to bed and call a doctor if your cold is severe. Watch your diet. Drink plenty of liquids. It pays to fight a cold the modern way. Get a bottle of Sal Hepatica today.



**TUNE IN:** Fred Allen's "Town Hall Tonight"  
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colored boy, Oze Simmons, is just another Iowa player. Keep that in mind."

And all afternoon there wasn't an unfair or unethical gesture towards the Negro boy. Both teams knew it was a game—a game of fun. Late in the afternoon Jaeger happened to nail Simmons in a head-on tackle that could have been heard clear back on the Colgate campus. It reminded me of a Big Ben proclaiming one o'clock in London: *Bong!* Simmons got up, shook himself to make sure none of his hemstitching had ripped loose, and then jogged over and patted Jaeger on the back. Simmons can take it.

In the old days, several times a season, squads spent as much as sixty consecutive minutes practicing falling on the ball. The modern coach regards that as so much bosh. Players are taught that a bounding football is an erratic and uncertain proposition, but after a boy has wrestled with the pesky thing for twenty minutes he knows about all there is to know.

Practice must have stimulating variety. Psychologists insist that highly concentrated interest begins to flag after twenty-five or thirty minutes unless the work is constantly varied. No portion of the Colgate practice routine lasts more than this time without a shift to something different. We have group work in contrast to the squad work of the old days. When the boys report in the afternoon half a dozen kickers start punting. This gives the centers practice, and it gives the defensive backs practice in handling the punts. Now, it's fun to kick a football and it's fun to catch a football; and no one is bored or overworked. Perhaps a group of ends take turns in covering these kicks, and it may surprise the average fan to learn that there is no tackling. The punt catcher takes the ball and the ends race down, but the minute a tackle becomes the next move the boys ease off. I don't want any of these youngsters to twist an ankle or injure an arm or shoulder.

OF COURSE, it may be possible to go too far in making it easy, and Harvard may have had it too soft before Dick Harlow showed up as coach. The squad immediately jumped to the conclusion that Dick was a stern and exacting taskmaster. One player met a former Harvard star one afternoon just after practice started, and the grad asked whether everything was coming smoothly.

"We blocked and tackled until no one could stand up, and then we fell on the ball," said the player.

"What do you do tomorrow?"

"I'm not sure, but I think we sock each other with hand grenades."

Even the scrimmages these days are sometimes played jokingly. It would have been sacrilege in the old days. Bob Smith, a big All-American Colgate guard, eased over one night and said, "As soon as the Varsity gets on the five-yard line we're going to fumble and let the scrubs recover. When they give the ball to Chesty we're going to let him run ninety-five yards for a touchdown. Everybody will take a shot at him but we'll all miss the tackle, and the boys don't want you to think we've suddenly collapsed, so we're letting you in on the know. It's gonna be good, Coach."

It was a scream. Chesty had an inflated opinion of his ability, and these clowns

were pouring a little gasoline into the fire to see the flames shoot higher. One of the fastest boys on the Varsity pursued Chesty the whole ninety-five yards and just managed to miss a terrific tackle at the far end of the field as Chesty panted across for a movie touchdown.

AFTER the middle of October most scrimmages in practice are dummy or shadow affairs, and probably few fans know such things exist. The teams line up; the ball is snapped, and the lines lock; when a tackler reaches the ball carrier they both ease off, and the ball is considered "down."

Sometimes the old, grim spirit of football creates as much merriment as the new, as in the case of the small college that played a team having all the modern advantages. At home the small-college team usually dressed in a barn, so the players were tremendously impressed with the modern gym and dressing-rooms of their opponents. Just before the battle the coach delivered a magnificent oration and explained that football had to be fought out, man to man, there on the field, and that all this lavish equipment couldn't help. He ended up with a final burst and bellowed: "On the field, boys!"

With this, he dramatically jerked open the door—the wrong door—and the first four players dashed through "at top speed"—and plunged off the deep end of a beautiful tile swimming pool.

Coaches look out for their boys today more than they ever have before. When you see that trainer start for the middle of the field with the old water bucket it isn't a gesture. The trainer's first job is to see whether the boy has been hurt. The modern headgear, and particularly the new design that is cast entirely of rubber, affords great protection. But it is possible for a player to get bumped and dazed.

If the trainer thinks a player is out on his feet, he says, "Who're we playing today?"

"Syracuse."

"What's the score?"

"10 to 0."

"Whose favor?"

"Don't be silly, Jack." And the player grins.

Then we know he's all right. If he isn't, first aid is given.

In one game Buell, one of Harvard's great quarterbacks, got away for a long run and was finally thrown by a terrific tackle on the nine-yard line. He didn't get up. An official who had been following the play at top speed panted up to Buell's motionless form and asked, fearful of the worst, "Buell—are you hurt?" Buell, rolled over, shook his head dejectedly, and said, "No—but I'm damned disappointed."

Football was just fun—every minute.

Coaches don't swear much any more. I certainly never swore at a player in all my life, and a coach who swears at boys today is on his way out. Most such have gone. I know the coach of a prominent institution who, last fall, hadn't learned that football is a game and began to fuss. One of his most promising men turned, told the coach that football was just a game to him, and that he'd find something else for physical exercise. He did.

Early in the season and during the first

workout we scrimmage considerably, because a certain amount of physical contact is absolutely necessary to a boy in shape.

All young coaches love this period of scrimmaging and always want to "show 'em how." I sit back and smile when a young coach announces suddenly that he'll demonstrate how the blocking must be done on a particular play. The players, eager for an opportunity to prove how good they are, always take him on, and down he goes for a bump. About the fourth rehearsal he gets up rather slowly but he doesn't say anything. The next day I casually ask him how his hip is. He's surprised that I should know he's a little stiff.

This game of football, played for fun, is bringing more and more men into the game. A former Princeton quarterback said last fall:

"Thank heaven that we have Fritz Crisler at Princeton. He's making Princeton football a popular game for the players. Just think, he had nearly three teams in the Harvard game." Yes, and Ohio has used fifty players several times lately; Crisler appreciates that the more who participate, the more fun.

THE commercialization in football today, so often criticized, is giving thousands of students who aren't on the squad an opportunity for enjoyment in other games. The football receipts carry the costs of the entire athletic program. Football pays the deficit in golf, baseball, basketball, track, cross country, wrestling, boxing, fencing, swimming, hockey, lacrosse and other intercollegiate sports. And, even more important, it finances the athletic program for all intramural athletics. It builds the intramural buildings where the students play squash, tennis, handball, and hold gym classes and competitions.

I resent the charge that modern players are softies with their eyes on the gate and the grandstand. I think the open field blocking today is the hardest it has ever been. Old-style mass plays didn't afford as many opportunities for these wide open meetings. The boys today are fearless. They're beautifully conditioned, and when they leave football in their senior year and go out into the world they have the proper physical background. They aren't muscle-bound, and they aren't burned out.

Probably collegiate football today weighs most heavily on the coaches. All in all, the coaches are definitely better and of higher type than in the old days. I've observed the changing personnel over a sufficient span of years to give me an intimate impression.

In 1932 our team was unbeaten, untied, and unscored upon. As the season progressed I asked the boys for better and better performances. At the outset I suggested merely that we win; then that we win by 20 points; then that we hold our opponents scoreless; and finally I asked 'em to keep Penn State from making a single first down. As the team trotted on the field that day one of the regulars remarked: "Two games to go. By the time we play Brown, he'll ask us to keep 'em from coming on the field."

We all laughed, and with laughter on their lips they went out and won again. But they weren't thinking entirely of victory as I had in a weak moment. They were just having a swell time.

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**100% DISTILLED . . . *Keeps your engine clean***

# Burned MATCHES

(Continued from page 48)

above the bunk. Then he looks at Matt. "Didn't aim to treat you so rough, Joe." Matt hoists up his dipper and keeps it elevated until it's empty. Then he adds, "But don't do any more whittling here."

"Did you—burn it, Matt?"

Matt nods. "It was for your own good, old son. It was just a hunk of wood. Like a totem pole or any of those heathen things. It burned like a torch. It's gone now."

Joe doesn't say anything for a long time. Then he turns his face to the wall. "You hadn't ought to have burned it."

Matt gets up and fills his dipper again. Quiet? It's so still in the cabin you can almost hear your thoughts moving.

"That ain't all of it, Joe. I'm finishing the job right, now that it's started."

"Don't you do it." Joe knows what he means, and his voice shakes. "Kill me if you want to. But leave me be."

"Bah!" says Matt. "You'll live, and be a better man for it. It's just your faith we're going to leave behind. Toes up."

He isn't joking. He's joked before, in other winters, and Joe's got a defense for it. He just sits tight. But this is brass tacks.

"Not now, Matt. In the morning, maybe. I ain't feeling so good."

"So?" Matt sneers. "Is it you that's groggy, or your faith?"

"It's the flesh that's frail," Joe quavers. "That's all."

BUT he isn't so sure. He inches a little closer to the wall. Always before, on all their trails—and some have been bitter—Matt's stood beside him like a big, dependable rock. The lad that's in the cabin now is a stranger.

Matt empties his dipper. "I ain't going to argue with you, Joe. I'm just going to tell you a couple of things about your penny-ante superstitions. Think 'em over after I've blown out the light."

"Here's the first. Go to the mat with it and growl. . . I saw a cartoon, once. In one of those humorous magazines. Here's Father Time, blowing around in space. He's got his scythe over his shoulder, and his nightshirt is fluttering. He's got a magnifying glass in his hand and he's looking through it at a little ball about the size of a pea. 'Why,' he says, grinning, 'there's live things on it!'

"That little ball was the earth, Joe. And you're one of the live things. Crawling and creeping and blazing big trails over a world the size of a pea. Whittling on hunks of wood. Think about that!"

There's something about Matt. When

he puts all his force to it, nothing can stand against him. He doesn't have to bluff, because you know he's got the cards.

"Yeah," he says. "One of the live things. . ."

"I've thought of that," says Joe, inching closer to the wall. "We don't amount to much."

"Here's another, old son: Where's this heaven you talk about? Where's it at?"

"Dunno," says Joe. "It's somewhere or other. I don't claim to understand—"

"Up?" insists Matt. "Down? North or south, maybe?"

"Up, I guess," says Joe. "I dunno."

"Take the North Star," says Matt. "We've aimed on it more than once, across the barrens. You know how far away it is? If you could go around the world eight times in one second—zip!—like that—it would take you near eight years to get to the North Star. And out beyond—"

"Don't, Matt," says Joe. "It ain't good for us to figure things like that. I dunno where heaven is. All we got's a promise—"

"HERE'S another," says Matt. "You figure you got a soul?"

"Sure, I got a soul."

"Has a husky got a soul? Or a rabbit? What about bugs? They all got souls?"

"Well—I dunno—"

"Yes or no? You can't have faith without figuring, old son. That's what we got brains for, if any. Yes or no?"

"Probably not, then."

"Probably not," says Matt. "And those scientific birds have proved that one time we were all tadpoles wriggling in the mud. We didn't have souls then. And when we crawled out on land, and took to the trees, still no soul. And then we got down out of the trees and begun to strut our stuff. Called ourselves men—but we're still animals, you understand. We are yet. Just where along the line did we rate this soul business?"

"I dunno." Joe's got his arm over his head. But Matt's beating him down, and there's no escape.

Matt don't let up. He drags out the arguments he's been saving for nineteen years; the poisonous and logical questions which only faith can answer. He knows Joe's got no defense. Joe isn't much of a hand at argument. He's always looked up to Matt, accepted his word as gospel.

In the end, to clinch it all, Matt comes back to where he started:

"It's just like that gadget of wood you whittled out, to give you something real to hold on to. You claim it stood for promises, but where are the promises now? Where's the gadget? Eh, Joe?"

Joe groans now.

"It burned, Joe," says Matt, nodding. "Like anything made of wood. It's ashes. It's gone. Just like your faith is gone. You'll never find it again."

"I'll find it," Joe wails. "I'll find it again, Matt. You bet I will. I got to."

But he's like a little boy lost in the dark, deep in the woods. "Nothing'll hurt me," he tells himself, knowing in his heart he'll never make it to the open again. "I'll find my way out. I ain't scared. . ."

If it hadn't been for the squareface Matt has drunk, he'd have heard Joe pull out in the morning. As it was, when Matt wakes up at near noon, the cabin's empty and cold. Joe hasn't built the fire. He's

gone; and his blankets and dogs are gone.

Matt doesn't lose any time. He throws his outfit together and harnesses his dogs; and there's black murder in his heart. He's a musher, is Joe, one of the great trail-eaters of the North. He's second only to Big Matt, in fact, and he's got several hours' start. But Matt figures he can overhaul him. He's got to, before Joe gets to Circle. He can almost see Joe rolling in down yonder.

"You was right, boys," he'd tell the rest of the gang. "Matt cracked, wide open. Talked wild, heathenish things. I had to make a run for it."

Yes, he'd have to overhaul Joe. He'd have to slap him down again, tie him up, and fetch him in to the post. He'd have to get his story in first.

"Poor ol' Joe," he'd tell them. "I had to treat him rough. It came over him sudden. Howled like a wolf. So I've fetched him in. Don't listen to his gibbering. His alleged mind's fixed on some gadget he thinks he whittled out, which he figures I took from him."

But by the time he trails Joe to the Porcupine—which is the second day out from the cabin—Matt sees that Joe isn't heading for Circle. Joe's heading north. Matt follows; and the blackness in his heart changes to something that's cold and lonely and forsaken. It isn't any pretense now. Poor ol' Joe is loco, after all.

For there's nothing north of the Porcupine. Nothing but the barrens and moaning pinnacles and wind that's colder than interstellar space. Nothing but icy desolation. Matt knows it. Joe knows it. And Joe's heading into it, blind.

Why?

"He's looking for it," Matt tells himself. "He's looking for that gadget he whittled out. He's facing into those ages he's never been afraid of before, but now he's empty-handed. . . Wait up, Joe!" He raises his voice in a shout. "Wait up, old son!"

But only the echoes roll back.

Matt knows he'll have to do the fastest mushing of his career. The signs show plainly enough that Joe's traveling like a storm. His sled has swung wide at the turns. He's riding the runners and his dogs are running wild.

The second night out from the Porcupine Matt's closing in on Joe. When the third night rolls down, his man is almost in sight. The trail's still plain. Matt pushes on.

THE long night wanes. At an hour which folks two thousand miles south of the Porcupine would call sunup, Matt's team pours over a hump into a glacial groove. This groove drops down to a frozen creek, and up again on the other side. Matt can't see the creek, the last jump-off being too steep; but he knows it's there. And he knows Joe's there, down at that canyon. Because there's no trail beyond.

"Wait up, Joe!" Matt bawls. "Wait up! It's Matt! Your pardner, Matt!"

But there's no answer. When Matt comes to the jump-off, with the creek bed below him, he sees why, and a groan bursts from his lips. He's too late, after all. Joe's wild race is finished.

What's happened is plain to the eye. No old-timer in his right mind would have tried to cross such ice. It was *cultus* on the face of it. But Joe had tried it. And the rotten ice had given way. It had all hap-

# She wants a Refrigerator!



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start at \$69.50 f.o.b.  
Three different types  
— Monitor Top,  
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*Merry Christmas  
and a  
Thrifty New Year*

SANTA says beribboned doo-dads are "out" this Christmas! She's told him what she wants—a gleaming new General Electric Refrigerator! That's a gift that will give her pride for many a long year!

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THRIFT UNIT REFRIGERATORS

pened quickly. At this temperature, there are only two kinds of mushers left when ice caves in: the quick and the dead. The sled had gone through and the black current had clutched it, sucking the dogs under. Joe had floundered his way to good ice; and so made it back to the bank.

Joe had only seconds to go, then; and he'd known it. It wasn't fear of death that had driven him to such a frenzy of effort, but the fact that he was unprepared. Empty-handed. . . . He'd clawed down a little debris left in a high crack by the summer flood. A twig or two from some patch of timber, far upwind. Some dried leaves, a shred and tatter of moss. He'd scraped these together and taken off his stiffening mittens to get at his waterproof matchesafe.

He'd probably been able to light a match or two—Matt couldn't see at this distance—but the flame hadn't taken hold. And while he'd tried again, kneeling there, his fingers had become claws and the claws had turned to iron. So Joe, giving up at last, had settled back a little upon his heels, the hood of his ice-encrusted, frozen parka bent downward. It was a curiously comfortable pose, even if it was hopeless. Restful, somehow. At ease. . . .

MATT'S dogs collapse in their tracks the minute they halt. For a while they're willing to lie there, heads on paws, their breath rising like white steam. They don't know the torture Matt's going through, looking down at Joe. All they know is that they've mushed like wild through four days and nights, with three cold camps and two stops for grub. They crave to get out of here. Back to camp.

So, when they grow whining and uneasy, Matt gets up. There's one thing more he can do for Joe. It's a tough chore, but it's the last that any man can do for a good partner. It's tougher than usual for Matt, under the circumstances. If only he'd overtaken Joe before the finish. . . .

But it's too late for that. Joe had died, as he was. Without hope.

Matt takes his ax with him when he goes down to the flat beside the creek. This is glacier country, and there's ice crevasses, choked with snow, piercing the wall to right and left. Matt clears the snow out of one of these, and hacks out blocks of ice to seal it over. It'll make a perfect tomb. The wolves can't break in. The ice is eternal. Five thousand years from now and Joe'll still be there, just as he is.

When everything's ready, Matt comes over to where Joe is. It's the first time he's come near him; and, as he draws close enough to take notice of details that he'd missed before, the ax drops from his hand. He pushes back the hood of his parka and stands there spraddle-legged, his head uncovered.

For Joe hasn't passed out in desperation and fear, but smiling and at ease. His lowered face, in the shadow of his parka, is happy. Just like he'd sat in the cabin, looking up at the shelf in the corner, when the gadget's done. Like a little boy who's come at last to the open, with the dark woods and the terror and loneliness behind him; who's saying to himself, "It wasn't so bad. I wasn't scared. . . ."

# It's the LAW!

BY DICK HYMAN

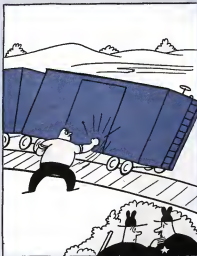
ILLUSTRATED BY G. SOULOW



In Collingswood, N. J., dogs are forbidden by ordinance to bark between the hours of 8 P. M. and 6 A. M.



An ordinance in Mt. Pulaski, Ill., forbids boys to throw snowballs at trees within the city limits



It is against the law in Maryland to knock a freight train off the track



Florida has a law forbidding you to hire away your neighbor's cook

IT'S THE LAW appears each month in *The American Magazine*

And when Matt looks down at the snow in front of Joe, he sees why. It's the way Joe's looked down when the second match he's lighted has dropped from his iron fingers. The truth had been there, lying on the snow. He'd found what he'd lost. The gadget he'd whittled out wasn't ashes, after all. Only the wood had burned. . . .

MATT'S a big man, and strong. Joe's body is easy to carry. He's carried him often before, when Joe's sick or crippled. He's easier than ordinary to carry now, because his body isn't limp, but unyielding as iron. When he places Joe gently down in the niche, he's kneeling still.

"So long, Joe," Matt says, just like one

partner would say to another when they're to be separated for a spell. "I'll be seeing you. Wait up for me, somewhere along the Trail."

But before he arches the ice blocks above Joe's head, sealing the tomb, he brings in the two matches Joe had lighted. The first one's long. The second had burned halfway, making it shorter.

Matt arranges these matches just the way they'd been before, in front of Joe. He arches the ice blocks over and shovels in snow to hide all trace of the spot from wolves which might pass that way.

"So long, Joe," he says again.

Then he tightens his belt and goes away from there, leaving Joe to face the ages, kneeling before his cross.

\* \* \* \* \*



# You can Live *11* more years than your Father!



The average American's life-span has increased by 11 years since 1900. But these extra years are *not a gift*—you can earn and enjoy them only by sensible, moderate living. Rest. Relax oftener. Watch what you eat. And, if you drink, choose a whiskey that *AGREES* with you.

"Find out for us how the human system responds to different forms of whiskey—give us your impartial verdict," said the House of Seagram last Spring to a thoroughly equipped group\* of research men.

Their answer came after months of fact-finding effort. It proved *Seagram's Crown Whiskies*, blended the special Seagram way, to be the form of whiskey most likely to agree with the average, moderate man.

Seagram's Crowns, already enjoyed by millions for their fine, rich taste, were thus given the highest possible rating for *kindness*: they were accorded the right to be called "*a most wholesome form of whiskey*."

Therefore, in seeking fine-tasting whiskey and whiskey most likely to agree with you, follow this guide to whiskey-kindness which has already rewarded so many sensible men. Choose Seagram's Crowns. Serve them regularly at home—your guests will appreciate your thoughtfulness. \*Name on request

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#### Seagram's Five Crown Blended Whiskey

The straight whiskies in this product are 5 years or more old, 25% straight whiskey, and 75% neutral spirits distilled from American grain. Bottled under this formula since May, 1936.

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90 PROOF

**Seagram's Crown** **BLENDED WHISKIES**  
A MOST WHOLESOME FORM OF WHISKEY

# PLAN IT Yourself

*HERE are the prize-winning designs for the completed house from cutouts which appeared in the July and August issues*

 THE game of housebuilding, presented in the July and August issues of THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE, has proved most successful. It has been fun for thousands of readers, but, more important, it has enabled hundreds of men and women to envisage clearly for the first time the new homes they have dreamed about for years. Now they have their dream homes before them, designed from miniature paper rooms, to study and amend.

Scores of readers who entered the cutout contest for completed homes, announced in August, have written that they intend to build real houses from their floor plans when the contest is over. Every prospective home-builder will find useful tips in the winning plans.

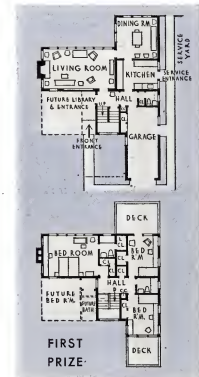
Here are the winners:

*First prize, \$100, Myrthé Stauffer, 3 Garden Lane, New Orleans, La.*

*Second prize, \$50, Charlotte F. Higgins, 73 West 5th St., Dunkirk, N. Y.*

*Third prize, \$25, J. E. Thayer, Jr., 16 Woodley Ave., Asheville, N. C.*

Five other plan-it-yourself architects came so close to the prize money that the judges awarded them honorable mention for their excellent house plans. They are: Helen Todd, 802 Grayson



While this house can be built on a narrow lot, it has three exposures each for living-room, dining-room, and two bedrooms. The third bedroom has two exposures. The first- and second-floor halls are small, but they provide easy access to all rooms. One bathroom is well placed above the first-floor washroom. Future expansion is provided for in the plan

well to remember when you are preparing to build a home.

1. The first-floor hall should give direct access to the living-room, stairs, coat closet, washroom, kitchen, and garage.

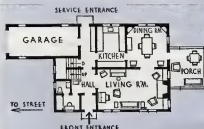
2. Stairs should be centrally located, or there will be lost space on the second floor.

3. The living-room and dining-room of the small or medium house, such as those designed from cutouts, are much more livable if adjacent. They should not be separated by stairs and hall. Imagine yourself giving a party in any of the three winning plans, and note how much more convenient the room arrangement is than if living-room and dining-room were separated by a hall.

4. Bathrooms should be above first-floor washrooms or the kitchen to save expense on plumbing installation costs. It is good practice to have one bathroom opening from a master bedroom or between two bedrooms, but a second bathroom should open from the hall.

St., San Antonio, Texas; Helen McCutchen, N. 507 Mill St., Colfax, Wash.; Marion E. O'Leary, Elkhorn, Wis.; William F. Gauntt, 1326 North Dearborn St., Indianapolis, Ind.; and Paul E. Burdick, 1833 West 47th St., Los Angeles, Calif.

The fundamentals for which the judges first looked in the house plans are



Of the three houses, the one at the left would be the most economical to build because it is the most compact and regular in outline. The first floor has an ample vestibule, hall, powder-room, and washroom. The fireplace is well situated, and the dining-room is so arranged that it can serve in combination with the living-room. This house will save steps. All rooms except the kitchen have two exposures



In the plan at the right the living-room and master bedroom have three exposures each, and all other rooms have two, thus insuring light and cross ventilation. From both living-room and dining-room, French doors open to the terrace. The halls are rather long, but the garage and service entrances are well located. On the second floor each bath is placed between a pair of bedrooms





# LET THE *Magic Voice* MAKE YOUR CHRISTMAS MERRY

RCA Victor's newest miracle is the leader of 24 radio improvements that give you more for your money

AT NO former Christmas have you had the opportunity to give your family so fine a radio as you may this year. For this is the first Christmas of RCA Victor's Magic Voice—the new radio built to create a real illusion of “room presence.” The Magic Voice not only seems to bring the performers into your home, but it keeps out distracting and distorting sounds.

The Magic Voice is created by an entirely new sound system which gives the famous Magic Brain new expression... produces the greatest acoustical advance since the Orthophonic Victrola. With this improvement goes a wealth of other features including Metal Tubes, the Magic Eye and the Selector Dial with the Automatic Band Spreader. All combine to make the 1937 RCA Victor radios extra values, to give you more for your money.

Your RCA Victor dealer will be glad to prove the many ways in which these new 1937 models give you more for your money. Hear the Magic Voice. See how RCA Victor Magic is to be found in all RCA Victor radios.

**RCA Victor radios for 1937 include 37 other models from \$20 to \$600**



All prices f. o. b. Camden, New Jersey, subject to change without notice. You can buy RCA Victor radios on C. I. T. Easy Payment Plan! Put new life into your present radio—use RCA Metal Tubes! Remember, any radio set works better with an RCA Antenna System. Listen to “The Magic Key” every Sunday, 4 to 5 P.M., E.S.T., on NBC Blue Network.

**RCA Victor**  
A SERVICE OF THE RADIO CORPORATION OF AMERICA



(ABOVE) Magic Voice, Magic Brain, Magic Eye Console Model 9K-2. A 9-tube, 5-band superheterodyne with RCA Metal Tubes, 20 other features. \$129.95

(RIGHT) Have the music you want when you want it with the RCA Victor Record Player. Converts any AC radio into an electric phonograph. In walnut only \$16.50. In red, white or black finish... \$18.50



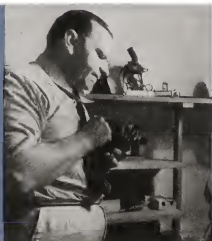
## WHAT THE MAGIC VOICE IS

In each RCA Victor Magic Voice radio the speaker is acoustically sealed into a unique tone chamber. Grouped in this are 5 gleaming Tone Control pipes. You will never see them. They require no attention, no adjustment. But sound flowing through this silvery corridor loses all mechanical quality. “Boom” is trapped. The program flows directly into the room... reaches you as the microphone hears it. You listen to radio as you have wished it might be. This is the Magic Voice... the Magic Brain given new realism, new truth, new beauty.



# Snap AT YOUR CHANCES

There's money in split seconds. . . Here's the story of amateur photographers whose shots are seen around the world



BY  
ELEANOR  
KING

**A** TERRIFIED girl ran up to a New York cop one morning not long ago. "Officer," she gasped, pointing upward, "for goodness' sake, is nobody going to help that poor man? Look—he's falling out of the window!"

The cop looked up, startled; then grinned. "Calm yourself, lady. That's

just another one of them amateur photographers. That guy's always hanging outa winders gettin' a new angle for a picture."

Feeling somewhat foolish, the young woman went about her business on terra firma, while the man on the 22d floor hung by his toes to get a startling top view of a window washer. He was an amateur and, for amateur photographers, risking one's life is nothing.

No less than 12,000,000 amateurs in the United States make over 500,000,000 snapshots a year and endless miles of moving pictures. Included among these camera fiends are many famous people. Amelia Earhart, for instance. One day, when she was an unknown girl in California, ambitious for a flying career, she was passing an oil field when a big gusher came in. She got pictures of it, which a

real-estate agent bought to use in his promotion schemes. This money became the nest egg for a down payment on her first airplane.

Gene Tunney, Al Jolson, Postmaster General Farley, Mrs. Hoover, and King Edward VIII are all camera fiends.

**O**FTEN this hobby brings unexpected profits to its devotees, enough to put them through college, say. Or perhaps it leads to a new job in another profession.

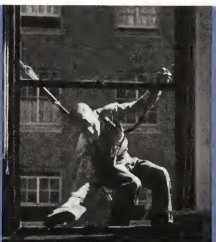
A neighbor of mine fiddles around with a cheap box camera. Mostly he takes pictures of his young son. One of these he entered in an amateur snapshot contest, and won \$100. Then all of his friends who had been calling him a lunatic for spending so much time and energy trying to get his pictures just right began, rather sheepishly, to ask questions

like this: "John, if I paid you \$5 would you make a picture of little Agnes?" John, after long practice on his own son, had developed a flair for catching the youngsters in characteristic and endearing poses, and now he is making good pin money out of it.

Perhaps, like Henry Shimer, you haven't much time for taking pictures until after dark. This young man dallied around with a \$2 box camera 25 years old. One night he was taking pictures of a storm thrashing about Manhattan skyscrapers, and about three o'clock in the morning clicked a bolt of lightning striking the Empire State Building. He rushed to a metropolitan daily with that piece of luck, and it was bought on the spot. Mr. Shimer copyrighted the lightning photograph and has sold prints to magazines and schools. One print found a purchaser as far away as Sweden.

They are all ages, these camera addicts, from seven to seventy. The seven-year-old daughter of a friend of mine has just received her first \$5 check—for a snapshot of her doll made with a 79-cent camera. It won a prize in a Texas camera contest.

And if you know your grandmothers



these days you'll go looking for them in the most dangerous places—climbing steel girders with camera in hand, or clinging to a teetering scaffolding photographing architectural details!

That was how I met Mrs. Antoinette Hervey, a New York housewife and grandmother, who has been taking pictures for 42 years. Perched on top of the scaffolding surrounding the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, she was waiting for a shaft of light to fall across a statue's niche. Mrs. Hervey laughed merrily when I asked if there weren't less precarious positions from which to get a good view.

Mrs. Hervey is a thrilling example of the lifetime happiness a hobby can bring you. She began having camera adventures in her youth, and now, in her sixties, she's not left holding the sack with time

*When amateur shutters really click we get results like these: Left to right—a seaman on the British carrier *Hermes* snaps Charles A. Lindbergh after his crack-up on the Yangtze River, China; an old meetinghouse near Fairfield, Conn., as seen by John Rawling's camera; Wallace Beery, veteran amateur, tinkering with equipment in his Beverly Hills home; a whirling line (the blur in the foreground) about to be thrown to seven Hindu survivors of the *Silver Hazel* wreck, off the coast of Luzon, P. I.; a perilous occupation recorded by Herbert G. Kehl; lightning strikes the Empire State Building and Henry Shimer catches it in his box; and, above, "Left Ashore," a famous amateur shot by J. M. Bridges, of Brooklyn, N. Y.*

heavy on her hands. She's always eager for tomorrow, and a new picture.

"You don't have to travel across a continent, or even across town, to find a fit subject for your lens," Mrs. Hervey told me. "I found what I wanted to photograph by looking out the window." The view from her apartment, 25 years ago, was of the skeleton of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. She took pictures, misty and soft, of the disconnected piers

and naked Gothic arches outlined against the sky. She became so intrigued with her subject that she concentrated on it more and more, and, the first thing she knew, people were coming to her to buy the photographs she had made.

Magazines and newspapers, business firms and individuals, seek her out. A building firm in Cleveland wanted a picture of the exterior of the cathedral showing the scaffolding around it, which they



had erected; a man, married in St. Ambrose's Chapel, of the cathedral, wanted photographs of it for his now motherless little daughters. They bought the pictures from Mrs. Hervey. Her photographs made enough to pay for a trip to Europe.

Mrs. Hervey's pictures now hang in every annual photographic salon of the best pictures of the year.

Adolf Fassbender, professional New York photographer who, for the past seven years, has had a growing class of amateurs coming to him for instruction, likes to tell of his prize pupil. He is a banker past seventy who was trying to retire, but found the siren call of Wall Street irresistible until he started taking pictures and developing them himself in his own darkroom. Now he wanders about his estate, discovering, with the help of his lens, a wind-blown pine or a distant vista—the beauty of which had escaped him before.

Don't let timidity hold you back if you have the urge to click a shutter. If you are a beginner compare your work with that of other beginners, not with the expert shots of amateurs of 20 years' standing. There's Louis Seceney, a young amateur in his twenties, whose regular job is collecting coins from pay telephones in New York.

"I used to compare my first efforts," he said to me, "with the beautiful pictures I saw hung in photographic salons. I would get discouraged and put aside my camera for weeks. Then one day I submitted a snapshot in a beginners' camera contest. I won third prize." Mr. Seceney realized then for the first time that, as a beginner, he wasn't bad. He slung his camera over his shoulder and went in for picture shooting with determination. Today his prints are exhibited and bought.

No matter who you are—farm boy or bank president—no matter where you live—South Dakota or New York—there are pictures around for you to take. Richard L. Bare, a graduate of the University of California and a resident of Modesto, Calif., finds the relics of old mining towns a subject for his lens.

Charles J. Belden makes movies of range cattle and sheep on his ranch, the Z Bar T, near Pitchfork, Wyo. They are so excellent that they are bought by educational film companies.

Mrs. John F. Haller, who lives in Middlebury, Vt., a town of 2,000 souls, snapped a photograph of her baby sitting in silhouette against a window. It won several thousand dollars when she submitted it in a prize competition in 1931. Today she makes color photographs for advertisers.

YOU never know where this hobby may lead. Margaret Bourke-White, America's favorite example of the heights a young woman can reach in a photographic career, had no thought of being a professional when she worked her way through Cornell University by selling her home-made pictures of campus scenes.

Steichen, whose name you see under many a professional photograph, was once a lithographer's salesman with a hobby for taking pictures. When, in an advertising campaign, he discovered his firm using unlife-like pictures of a pig, he rushed to a country fair and began photographing pigs on his own account. As he made one of his shots he stumbled against his tripod and got an accidental but unusual effect. That

picture found favor in the eyes of the boss, and now Steichen is famous.

Another is Paul Hesse, who, as a boy, began snapping pictures avidly and developing them in the bathtub. Later he went to art school, established himself as a painter. Then, sensing a growing demand for artistic photography in illustrations and advertising, he put his old hobby to work and carved out a second successful career. Today he is one of America's foremost experts in color photography. The striking color photographs on the covers of THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE are products of his talent.

THE camera hobby may be very helpful in a business career. There is the case of a young employee of the city waterworks in Boston. When his superiors saw the pictures he had made in his spare time of waterworks projects they made him official cameraman for the company. He not only made a hit with his camera on the job, but was instrumental in putting through a reform affecting the health of all Boston when he took a colored moving picture film showing how the water that washed the city's beaches was contaminated.

If you're a camera enthusiast you're in notable company. The Crown Prince of Sweden and Prince Frederick of Denmark are never without their cameras. Even the Crown Prince of Crooning, Rudy Vallee, always has his camera with him.

If you have your camera always with you the chances are that sooner or later you'll get a picture worth money. Fred Hansen, pantryman on the ill-fated liner, Vestris, took photographs on the sloping deck of the ship just before she went down. As the survivors entered New York harbor in the rescue boat, a flood of newshawks came aboard to get pictures. No one had any, except Hansen, who suddenly recalled those snapshots he had made. Modestly he offered them at \$5 apiece. A New York daily paid him \$500 and a royalty.

Perhaps the largest sum of money ever paid for an amateur scoop was the \$4,000 paid by a commercial picture agency for the pictures of the Lindbergh airplane accident in the Yangtze River in China in 1931. The sailors on the British airplane carrier, the H.M.S. Hermes, were shooting scenes of the Lindberghs' take-off when, suddenly, the plane capsized in the water. When they sold the pictures the amateurs balked at keeping such a large amount of money for themselves and, instead, created and endowed the Lindbergh-Hermes Memorial bed, in the Hankow hospital, for soldiers and sailors of all nations.

The pictures taken last year on board the Dixie—ground on a Florida reef in a hurricane, its passengers trembling in the shadow of death—were made by an amateur. Several years ago, when the steamship President Harding rescued the sailors from a shipwrecked freighter, a ten-year-old boy photographed the rescue. He sold his pictures to a New York newspaper.

Too, there are many less dramatic opportunities for photographs which tomorrow will have historical importance and money value. A covered bridge, the town square with its influx of farmers on Saturday afternoon, the tent meeting, the country school, may not long survive. Pictures of small-town life made today will in the future make a valuable collection of Americana. Old colonial, Georgian, or Victorian houses

will eventually be gone forever, unless they are recorded in photographs. . . .

When the movie camera became available for everybody a whole new class of amateur photographers sprang up. The dyed-in-the-wool "still" devotee may never be won over entirely to moving pictures, but the younger generation are enthusiastic about them. Brought up on motion pictures, they see life in a series of dramatic action scenes.

Amateur clubs in cities and townships are filled with civic-minded citizens who take movies of slum districts, of unsightly trash heaps, of congested traffic conditions.

These films, shown to groups of hitherto lackadaisical citizens, stirle them into activity, forcing through city reforms. A \$6 amateur reel of the Children's Hospital in Washington, D. C., shown before the members of the Rotary Club, brought donations of \$10,000. When alumni associations view films of the sport, classroom, and campus life of their Alma Mater, the wallets of the old grads are opened generously. State publicity and historical societies are depending largely on amateur photographers to stock their film libraries.

In Bowling Green, Ky., a young dentist, an amateur cinematographer, has raised the level of the dental health in his community. His backwoods patients used to run from his office in fear when he tried to relieve them of aching teeth. Now he shows them his amateur reel of the various operations involved in pulling teeth or making crowns and inlays. Fright turns to trust, and his patients meekly submit.

THE latest and most popular craze among lens lunatics is that of the candid camera. You'll find these maniacs stalking celebrities at every gathering. They also get amazing shots of bums, peanut vendors, and vegetable hawkers on the streets. They snap stage scenes, acrobats in action, and burlesque shows. Such snaps are possible because the high-speed lens, "the cat's eye," permits the taking of a picture under the most difficult conditions without special lighting. When you catch the town beauty in the midst of a sneeze, or the local political chief in a big yawn, everybody chuckles. The unconventional portraits that the cat's eye catches give renewed zest to the snapshot habit.

Dr. Erich Salomon, once a lawyer, banker, and publisher in Germany, did much to popularize the candid camera and its technique in America. By concealing his camera under his coat or in a brief case, and flipping either open for a fraction of a second, he obtained shots of justices, presidents, politicians, and financial magnates that for the first time revealed these people off guard—snatching forty winks at the conference table, looking thoroughly bored, or yawning in an opponent's face.

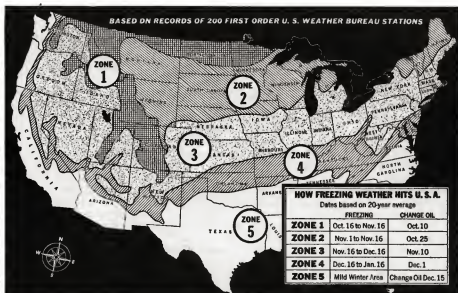
Of all hobbyists the amateur photographer gets the best breaks, the most frequent opportunities to display the fruits of his enthusiasm. National photographic salons, amateur snapshot exhibits, candid-camera shows spring up, one after another, in all communities. Business organizations, hospitals, schools, and local camera clubs hold exhibitions.

We camera addicts can enjoy our hobby, get recreation and rest from it, satisfy our creative urge for self-expression—and at the same time pick up a little cash.



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**AND MOBILLOIL  
WINTER  
GEAR OIL**

# The amazing MR. MEANS

(Continued from page 25)

plots and counterplots, the dangers, the skulking figures which trailed him. At last, however, triumphant over every obstacle, according to his own statements, he rescued that suitcase from the British secret agents and returned it to the German spy bureau intact.

According to Means, there fell upon him the job of buying millions of dollars' worth of supplies for Germany. Besides that, he had to circumvent spies of the Allied government and stop British importation of goods from this country, to say nothing of further crippling England by ruining several lucrative lines of British business. Just when he had really warmed to his task America sent all the German spies home, broke off diplomatic relations, and then, herself, entered the war. That made Means a private detective again. Soon, however, another big opportunity loomed before him. The widow of a rich lumberman needed saving from the wiles of an adventurer. Who should ride valiantly to her rescue but Gaston B. Means—at the usual rate of \$100 a day.

IT ALL happened this way: The lumberman's death had given the widow a million-dollar share, about, in his big estate. With this she had gone to Europe, married again, disagreed with her husband, decided to flit about a bit, and at last had fallen into the clutches of a European swindler. Her family, learning this, appealed to the private detective agency for which Means worked. He was sent abroad to break up the romance.

Means threw his whole heart into the job. By this time he was himself married—to a woman who believed utterly in his fantasies—but he did not allow his personal affairs to interfere with business. He hurried across the ocean and met the widow. He circumvented the villain. He helped her divorce her husband. Then he became her knight errant, and brought her back to America and assisted her with her business affairs. Suddenly a great thing happened. In fumbling through an old tin box which the widow had given him, the great investigator found a crumpled piece of paper. This was important! He summoned the members of the family.

"I've found a new will," he announced. "It is of a later date than the former one, and bequeaths practically the whole estate to my client, instead of what she got!" "Is it genuine?" they asked.

"That," said the amazing Mr. Means, "must be thoroughly investigated."

To this end he rented a large apartment in New York. Then he summoned a staff which consisted of his brother, his brother's wife, his brother's father-in-law, and his own father-in-law. They investigated and investigated. This continued for two years.

Meanwhile, Means gained more and more of a hold on the widow's finances, even endorsing her checks and placing them to his own account. At last, with practically every cent gone, the widow went to a target range with him one day to practice. Means brought back her body in his motorcar. He said that she had suddenly changed her mind and had shot herself instead of the target. This defense held good before a jury in his home town and he was acquitted in fifteen minutes.

There now remained the will in which Means held a half-interest. It was declared a forgery, but a trial was necessary to quiet the whole affair. Gaston Means entered into that with alacrity. He marshaled witnesses for the trial. He instructed them upon their testimony and he produced loads of papers and documents by which, he said, he could prove everything. But the trial went steadily against him. Attorneys for the estate called him a forger, a confidence man, and other unkind names.

ANY other man might have withdrawn as best he could. Not Means. He was determined to prove his high character and great moral fiber. To achieve this he decided to perform a tremendous service for the government. His price would be a letter of recommendation to the Chicago judge from the United States Army.

Seeking out high-ranking members of the United States Army, he told them a weird story of a trunk crammed to the top with documents obtained from the German spy organization when it operated in America. These documents would explain every subversive activity undertaken by the Germans—telegrams, diplomatic papers, secret orders, reports of spies. Gaston Means would remove this trunk from its hiding place deep in the North Carolina hills. All he asked in return was recognition of his great feat, addressed to the judge in Chicago.

An intelligence officer was detailed to go South with Means. When they reached Concord, N. C., Means would disappear, then reappear with word that he had missed his contact. Then he would vanish again. Finally word came out of the hills that the trunk was being brought in, and at last, in the dead of night, it reached an old barn on the Means estate. It arrived, of course, while the officer was asleep, thus preventing his questioning its mysterious guardian. Means lifted the lid for a peek.

The trunk was filled with suitcases, all apparently crammed with documents. Certainly a barn was no place to examine them. Means suggested that the trunk be sent intact at once to New York, and when the Intelligence officer wasn't looking he took the container to the station.

Then, with the baggage check, he rushed back to Washington to get that letter of recommendation. He insisted that he had delivered the documents and that the Army should now pay its debt. However, in the midst of the argument, exciting word arrived. The trunk had reached its destination. Gaston B. Means suddenly discovered that again scoundrels and spies and skulking knaves had conspired against

him. Somewhere between the barn and New York that trunk had been opened. All the documents had disappeared.

The man stormed and strode about. This was outrageous. Gaston Means felt sure he knew exactly who had done this despicable thing. He would find the scoundrels and force them to give back the papers—that is, he would do all this if he could only get that letter from the Army to the Chicago judge. In the meantime, however, the Army investigated and found that the weight of the trunk when checked at Concord was exactly the same as when it arrived at its destination. So Means washed his hands of the whole affair.

THE case dragged on in Chicago, with little chance of disciplinary action, since Means did not again enter the jurisdiction of the court. Then a new election came along, and the head of the private detective agency for which this fictioneer had worked was made Director of the Bureau of Investigation. Quite a gasp ran through the organization when, in October, 1921, we learned that one of our co-workers was to be Gaston B. Means.

Throughout Means' mad career his employer had kept faith in him. He believed the man's story of persecution, by the underworld for the sake of the plots he had exposed, and by Germany because he had not remained a spy when America entered the war.

Prohibition had reached that stage where bootleggers were obtaining much of their liquor by illicit withdrawals from warehouses. Presently the word went through the underworld that there was a man in the Department of Justice who could "fix things." That man was Gaston B. Means, who, when evans sought him out, made his position exceedingly clear.

"You see, it's this way," he would explain. "I'm a great friend of the President. As a high official of the Department of Justice, I know everybody in the Cabinet. And I'm on close terms with the National Committee. Now, the Committee is a little short of funds, so if you'll just pay me so much a barrel, I'll see that you get all the whisky you want. I can take care of anything in government departments except murder."

No one wanted murder; whisky was the desired commodity. When they questioned his authority, Gaston B. Means would suggest a further conference at his house in Washington. When the person arrived, Means would not be there. But while the guest waited the telephone would ring, again and again, apparently with urgent messages. Finally Means would arrive, all in a dither, and greet his visitor, then inquire of his secretary: "Any calls?"

"Yes. Senator Blank called. And the Attorney General. And the Secretary of State. And the White House."

The calls were faked, of course; it had been Means on the other end of the telephone when those messages came in. But the actor in this man never wavered. With the telephone close to his breast to conceal the fact that he was holding the hook down, he would "answer" his calls.

"Why, Senator!" he would say. "I'll look after that right away. You can depend on it." Or: "Now, Mr. Secretary, you can tell the President that it will all be attended to."

By the time he had finished a list of

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numbers the underworld visitor would be convinced that here was a man who really ran the nation. A deal would follow. Usually all Means wanted in advance was the cash necessary to pay the warehouse tax—this, it appeared, was highly necessary. He would then be glad to turn over the contents of an entire warehouse. So the tax would be paid in amounts running high into the thousands of dollars. After that the whisky man would wait and wait while the great Mr. Means was "called" here and there about the country in his official duties, with no time whatever to spend on opening up warehouses. On one occasion a whisky seeker became impatient. He called the Means home.

"Where's that fellow Means, who said he was going to get me all that stuff out of the warehouse?" he demanded.

The secretary was duly apologetic.

"I'm awfully sorry, but, you see, he didn't have time to let you know. He just left for New Orleans with seventy-five men to investigate the Ku Klux Klan!"

It seems inconceivable that a person could get away with such bald frauds as this. However, there was a psychological side to Gaston Means which must not be overlooked. If he had been called away to investigate the Ku Klux Klan, he knew he must be excused from opening warehouse doors to bootleggers. Further, he used the age-old trick of the confidence man in such deals—first involving his victims in a violation of the law. They would hesitate to make a complaint against him.

Rumors of his activities permeated Washington. The director refused to believe them. The Attorney General thought differently and ended his career as an agent.

THE Teapot Dome scandal had broken about the time Means was thoroughly discredited as a special agent. Immediately he turned his dishonor to his own ends. He wanted revenge and publicity. One day his name flashed across the first pages of the newspapers. Means was telling, before a senatorial committee, the "inside story of a crooked administration."

He purported to know everything about the Teapot Dome affair. He "confessed" to handling hundreds of thousands of dollars in bribes for ranking members of the administration. He "revealed" crooked dealings with foreign nations. In one instance, according to his story, a Japanese met him on a dark street and handed him \$100,000, for no apparent reason. Again, he "admitted" having buried a million dollars in crooked money. The nation was being sold out, said Gaston Means, and he knew the name and address of every despoiler. Furthermore, all this could be supported by documents which would be produced at the proper time. At last the committee insisted on seeing the papers. Means promised that they would be produced the next day. But he came to the meeting without them.

"I thought," said a senator, "that you were going to bring your documents."

"They're here," answered Means.

"Where?"

The big man shrugged his shoulders.

"The sergeants at arms have them."

But the sergeants at arms denied it.

Means appeared nonplussed. "Strange," he said. "Two sergeants at arms of the Senate appeared at my house last night. They showed me their badges. Then they

gave me this order. And they took all the documents away with them."

He passed forth a piece of paper which bore the purported signature of the committee head.

The senator examined it. "That's a forgery," he announced.

"A forgery?" Means leaped from his chair. "I've been tricked. Fooled by my enemies. I'll run them down if it's the last thing I ever do."

But Means never got around to it. There were so many other things to do. One of them was to keep himself out of the penitentiary.

WHISPERS had become complaints.

Gaston Means, with others, went to trial on a charge of conspiring to violate the Volstead Law. He gave a weird defense in which he attempted to show that he was only a tool of "higher interests" in accepting bribes to allow whisky to be removed from warehouses. The story failed to move the jury. He was convicted and sentenced to two years in Atlanta Penitentiary. Almost immediately afterward he was again tried.

It seemed that a group of men in Altoona, Pa., had conceived the brilliant idea of selling stock in a new kind of burial casket. It was to be of glass, so that a bereaved person could view the deceased from all angles. However, after having sold the stock, the promoters had failed to deliver this magical glass casket and had been indicted for fraud.

Thereupon Gaston Means, in all his plumage, had ridden into the picture, announcing that, with his power at the seat of government, he could, for \$65,000, quash the indictments. The defendants had paid. Then they had waited.

But Mr. Means had become terribly busy. He remained busy so long, in fact, that the defendants finally gave up, pleaded guilty, then complained long and loudly about the big government agent to whom they had given \$65,000 for doing nothing. Again Gaston Means was convicted and sentenced to two years, this sentence to be served after the former one. Thus at last we put Means away where he would cease to bother.

So we thought. Gaston Means had a different idea. He began a campaign to make those sentences run concurrently. He wrote me letters, promising, in return for this favor, to "solve" a tremendous conspiracy in diamond and whisky smuggling and a dozen other plots.

When that trick failed he became dangerously ill from gallstones and begged to get out so he could die in the bosom of his family. And while he suffered this approaching death, a woman interested in the welfare of convicts came to visit Atlanta Penitentiary, where he was incarcerated. Gaston Means forgot his gallstones. Craftily he thought out a possible means of obtaining a large sum of money. Would this woman care to hear the real, inside, true, never-before-revealed facts about the death of President Harding?

Thus came into being that horrible hoax, *The Strange Death of President Harding*, which was written shortly after Means finished his sentences and which the honest woman who had been victimized publicly repudiated shortly after its publication. For that matter, Means himself also repudiated it, somewhat gleefully, in

fact. Perhaps it was just one of his little jokes to insinuate that a President of the United States had been murdered by his wife. Besides, there was nothing further to be gained by lying. He had collected his royalties and, in addition, had found a new set of victims.

This was a group of men in New York who were interested in alleged subversive Soviet activities. Gaston Means, just out of prison, knew everything there was to know about that subject.

Did anyone realize, he asked, that two of the most dangerous agents in the Russian O. G. P. U., or secret police, were at that moment in America with \$2,000,000 to spend on destruction? They were fiends, these men, sent by Russia to instigate strikes, start forest and oil well fires, supply machine guns and tear gas bombs to big criminals, blow up bridges, destroy power and electric light plants, and demoralize the nation.

Moreover, if these gentlemen cared to have him make a secret investigation lasting about six weeks—at \$100 a day, of course—he was sure he could bring these two fiends to justice and further capture 24 trunks and 11 suitcases full of the secret orders under which these destroyers worked, together with all their notes, plans, and diaries.

His conferees brought up the subject of his prison sentences. Means rose to the occasion. Now that they mentioned it, this was the reason why he wanted to engage in such a desperate enterprise. He wanted to restore his standing by saving America. Beyond this, he wanted to redeem himself before the world for the sake of his growing boy and his trusting wife.

THUS the trail of the 24 trunks and 11 suitcases began. Instead of lasting only six weeks, it dragged out for three years. It led across America, into the deserts and hills of Arizona, down into Mexico, out again, back over the United States and into Canada. Time after time Means almost got his hands on those trunks and suitcases; time after time they slipped away from him. Once a sponsor paid out \$25,000 to get the documents from imaginary foes who had held Means captive in a mountain cabin. And Means got the papers; but, in returning them to New York, the inevitable happened. The secret agents of the dreaded O. G. P. U. stole them and ran away with them again!

Wilder and wilder the story became and, strangely enough, the more grotesque the situations Means concocted, the more he was trusted by his sponsors. One believer spent his entire life's savings to further the faker in his battle against these imaginary foes. On and on went the melodrama. At last it all got so hectic that perhaps Means tired of cooking up new adventures. He burst in upon his employers one day with the news that one of the Russian fiends had murdered the other and that all the 24 trunks and 11 suitcases had been burned and their contents destroyed.

It was a weak story, but Means told it with such attention to detail, such theatrics and glamour, that warrants were actually sworn out against a killer who did not exist and for a murder that happened only in the imagination of Gaston B. Means! Of course, Means followed this fiendish slayer with avidity. Several times he almost had him in his clutches. Then sud-



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denly his interest lagged. Colonel Lindbergh's baby had been kidnapped.

Immediately he sought several rich men and told them of a strange coincidence. Just before the kidnapping, he said, a former Atlanta convict had approached him in a New York speak-easy and asked him to take part. Of course he refused. However, he knew this kidnapper and he knew the whereabouts of the baby. Perhaps he could establish contact. While the rich men pondered over this, a real coincidence occurred. Mrs. Evelyn Walsh McLean, of Washington, through purely altruistic motives, sent for Means and, with no knowledge whatever of his claims, told him that since he was a crook and knew the underworld, he should be of assistance in finding the Lindbergh baby.

Actor that Means was, he did not bat an eye. Strangely enough, he said, he could do that very thing. Again he told the story of the speak-easy. Then he set forth to "make contact with the kidnapper." This was easily done, it seems. Back he came with the announcement that the baby-stealers wanted \$100,000.

THEN began a fabulous chase. Again there were plots and counterplots. Following his usual pattern, Means worked with a confederate who telephoned Mrs. McLean from time to time, telling of his difficulties in trying to break through the police lines with the baby.

Then Means promised to deliver the baby at a Southern resort. Mrs. McLean went there. Instead of the baby, there appeared with Means a confederate who posed as "the King of Kidnappers." He talked vaguely of death and dangers. He examined the surroundings. He touched nothing without making an elaborate show of wiping the surface with his handkerchief, and this in spite of the fact that he wore kid gloves. He looked into every closet and corner of the house. He listened to the voices of servants so that he might know them when he heard them again. At last he said, "You know, Mrs. McLean, we are in the business for the money only."

"I gave the money to Mr. Means ten days ago," she answered.

"Very well, then. The baby is well and

happy. It will be delivered to you tomorrow night on the side street in front of the cottages. There will be four cars. You are to walk between them and receive the child. If anyone follows you, machine-gun firing will begin immediately."

Mrs. McLean was willing to brave even this. But nothing happened. Then the telephone calls began again. By this time, everyone was designated by code. Means was No. 27, the King of Kidnappers was No. 19, Mrs. McLean was No. 11, and the baby was known as The Book.

Now, it seemed, hijackers were after the baby. It could not be delivered at the resort. It might not be delivered at all, if the hijackers stole it from the real kidnappers. Day after day this travesty went on.

Then the story, as usual, began to get even thicker. The King of Kidnappers complained by telephone that Means had placed two gunmen on his trail. Then Means said that the King was trying to double-cross him. Finally Means made a demand for \$35,000 in addition to the \$100,000 he had received plus \$4,000 expense money. Mrs. McLean tried to raise it and, failing, thought the whole matter over. Then she demanded that Means return all the money she had given him.

In the most courtly way—a bit hurt, of course, but bowing to the inevitable—Means agreed. The money was at Concord. He would get it at once. He hurried away. He did not come back. After quite a time a friend of the McLean family went to the Means home in Chevy Chase. There was Gaston Means, sitting calmly by his fireside.

"Where's that money?" demanded the friend.

Means displayed the greatest surprise. "Didn't Mrs. McLean get it?"

"She did not!"

There was consternation, astonishment, excitement. This was outrageous.



*Another in this series of human stories from the secret records of the G-Men will be told by J. Edgar Hoover in an early issue.*

"But," explained the flustered Mr. Means, "she must have it. She sent her messenger for it. He met me at the bridge just outside Alexandria as I was returning to Washington. It was night. He waved a red lantern. I stopped. 'I am Number Eleven,' he said. So," added Means, "what was I to do? I gave him the money!"

We have searched for that \$104,000 ever since. We dug up every foot of the yard surrounding the Means home. We dug in his basement. We even broke open a toy bank we found in the house, just in case. That affected Means.

"If you'd only told me you wanted to open that bank, I'd have given you the key," he said sorrowfully from his jail cell.

Only Gaston Means knows where that \$104,000 is hidden. Probably it lies with the many other thousands he collected in his life of fraud. Once he boasted that he hid his loot in graveyards.

However, the Federal Bureau of Investigation will work ceaselessly to outwit him. Gaston Means was sentenced to fifteen years for the Lindbergh hoax. This bureau has searched diligently for the money and will continue to do so throughout the years. We have hopes of finding it.

MEANWHILE, Means continues his fabulous lies from prison—all with the purpose of creating sympathy. A wild story is easily concocted by this man; if one fails he can try another. Nor is he shamed by being called a liar. During his trial for the Lindbergh hoax he took the stand in his own defense. Imagery tumbled from his lips concerning his alleged contacts with kidnappers, his dangers, his desperate efforts to reclaim the baby, which he insists still lives. As he finished he stepped down and sought a seat beside me.

"Well, Hoover," he asked, "what did you think of that?"

"Gaston," I answered, "every bit of it was a pack of lies."

He considered this for a long moment, his eyes blinking, his bullet head shoved forward over his bulking chest.

"Well," he said seriously, "you've got to admit that it made a whale of a good story!"

## Daughter of DIVORCE

(Continued from page 43)

tell her that her mother was a hard-headed ballad singer, originally from Topeka? It would make it so much easier now."

"Well," sheepishly, "I just thought..."

"That as long as your head is full of beautiful ideas you might as well forget truth. I'll bet your ties still look as

though they had been used for shoestrings."

She remembered to laugh. Ivan could be told anything, provided a smile accompanied it. She had not known that ten years ago.

She said slowly, "Ivan, will you let me have her for a few days? I have a cottage. I won't tell her who I am. She'd resent me if I had the right to control her. I think I'll be healthy for her."

He brightened again reached for her hands again. "Oh Becky, will you do that? And I'll come around too, if you'll let me."

If she'd let him. She nodded, smiling, and pressed his clumsy hands. . . .

FOR Becky the next days were wonderful and dreadful. Ivan was a lamb. So glad to be about her cottage. He wandered in and out with his books, perfectly content, so long as no reference was made to his

wrinkled trousers, or to the fact that he could not remember to mail a letter or that he ought to have a haircut.

But Drusilla. She had refused amiably and flatly to stay at the cottage. No, she'd rather have her room at the hotel. Besides, one of the bellboys was a good friend of hers. She could not be controlled. She would not be coaxed, charmed, coerced, or threatened into doing anything she did not want to do.

She was always pleasant, always cheerful. But Becky said to Ivan, "It's like trying to juggle quicksilver. You never get a firm grasp. How can you tell when she's going to want to do something and when she's going to want not to do it?"

"Oh, you can't tell," he said. "I don't bother her much."

She let him see her exasperation, for a moment. Then she called Drusilla. They



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had dined in the brown cottage and Drusilla, with a deck of cards, was telling the fortunes of the twins, who were more interested in the cards than in the fortunes.

"Drusy," Becky said, "we are going to do the dishes. You'll wipe, won't you?"

"Oh," Drusilla said, standing in her characteristic pose, her arms behind her back, her nose tilted eagerly as though she were sniffing. "I'll do them all alone."

"I'll wash them," Becky said, "and you can dry them. We can have fun."

Ivan opened his mouth as though to speak; then he closed it again.

"I'll do them all alone," Drusilla said. "I've got some good ideas about washing dishes and I don't want to be bothered."

"Don't break them," Becky said helplessly; "and call me if you need help."

A strange little gleam danced in Drusilla's eyes. "I won't break them and I won't need any help."

Nor did she. Becky, inspecting the immaculate kitchen later, said to Ivan, "Now, where did she learn? You've always lived in hotels, haven't you?"

"Oh, I don't know. She knows a lot of things without learning them."

"I can't feel that I've won a victory, Ivan. She only did the dishes because it was her royal wish. She didn't do them to please me."

"Well, she came through this time, anyway," he said.

**B**UT when she was asked to go to bed at ten o'clock she refused to go. Becky almost lost her temper. Even Ivan suggested that she let him take her to their hotel.

"No," Drusilla said. "I'd sort of like to stay up all night and watch the moon come up and go down, and after a while the sun."

"On the beach, alone?"

"Sure," Drusilla said. "It's pretty."

"You can't do it," Becky announced flatly.

Drusilla lifted her eyebrows and ducked her head, smiling. "Says who?" she asked.

That was when Becky almost told her. But it would mean losing her. She must not know like this. Her first words from her mother must not be a command.

"We can tie you in bed," Becky suggested pleasantly.

"I could get away, I guess."

"We could tie you so you couldn't get away," Becky said, smiling as though it were a game.

"I'd run away forever as soon as you let me up. And you couldn't tie me down forever. The police would get you."

So Drusilla put on her beret and her coat and went alone to the beach.

Becky put her head into one of the soft brown cushions on the soft

## Hide-out

"HOW long we got to hide out here?" Sam Rose kept asking that question until Carstarphen told him to pipe down. Then the older man got drunk for two or three days.

When he came to, Sam was talking to himself. "Don't let them hang me," he yelled. "I'll kill myself first."

He stumbled unevenly about the room until Carstarphen couldn't stand it any longer. With a curse he rushed out of the shack. There wasn't a sound on the salt flats except the whistle of the cold wind. And inside Sam Rose was circling around the room and crying out his guilt.

Carstarphen decided to take all the money and try to get through to San Francisco. When they started out to rob the paymaster in Ogden, Carstarphen had not meant to ditch Sam, but now the kid's nerve was gone; already raving about killing himself; he would betray the both of them some way.

He would have left at once, but a terrible thirst was upon him, and he took down the last quart. His system was so full of alcohol that he began to get drunk quickly. He tried to persuade Sam to take a drink, but the kid only lay silent on the bunk. Finally Carstarphen rolled over beside him.

He dreamed some peculiar things. He was surrounded by Indians, and they came at him to hang him. He lunged out at them.

He awoke to find himself choking Sam Rose. The kid was very quiet. He must have fainted, Carstarphen thought. He splashed a dipper of water over the kid's face, but something about the shape on the bed caused him to drop the dipper with a clatter. He grabbed Sam by the shoulders and shook him.

But Sam Rose was dead. Strangled. He was nearly cold and the marks of strangulation were in his face. Carstarphen hunted for a rope, looped it about the dead man's neck, slung the other end over a beam, and lifted the dead weight into the air. Under Sam's feet he overturned a chair.

He had just finished when he heard the door open. He whirled to face three men. One looked like a doctor. The others were plainly officers. But Carstarphen's self-possession was excellent.

"Gentlemen," he said. "My partner has committed suicide. I—"

The sheriff's hand went swiftly to his gun.

"I got you covered, buddy," he said. "A Piute Indian looked in your window about an hour ago and saw that fellow swinging on that beam. He cut him down, but he couldn't rouse you so he ran for me and the coroner. I'd be interested to know why you hanged him back up there, if he really did commit suicide."

D. C. O'FLAHERTY



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orange lounge and cried bitterly.

Ivan stood above her and put a light hand on her shoulder. "Oh, don't, Becky," he said, his voice curiously broken.

"It's that she doesn't love me; she doesn't even like me. Outside of that one comment on my hair I don't think she has even looked at me. I've always felt, Ivan, that somehow, some day, she'd know me. I even made pretty little pictures for myself. I saw a ballroom, a tall, beautiful young woman crossing the floor. (That would be Drusilla.) Our eyes would meet; there'd be that flicker; she'd know."

"Becky, dear," he said urgently. She stood and faced him. He kissed her, and she knew that he had wanted to kiss her for years.

"Becky," he said, "will you marry me?"

"I want to, Ivan," she said, "but I can't. I won't tell Drusilla I'm her mother. She must love me first. And to be a stepmother—she'd loathe it."

"Do you mean you have forgiven me my—my—"

"Transgressions? Oh, my dear, I was as much to blame as you. I bossed you. You can't stand it. Neither can Drusilla. I must find another way to her, just as I have found one to you, you darling, sloppy, head-in-the-clouds."

"Becky," he said huskily, "I'd reform. I'd even, I'd even—" he laughed. "I'd even remember our anniversary!"

"All right." She laughed too, a little brokenly. "Tomorrow I'll talk to her."

**H**ER opportunity presented itself beautifully. At about five o'clock the next afternoon, Drusilla ambled up to Ivan and Becky, who were under the same umbrella. Petey and Pat reached for an ankle apiece, but she evaded them and squatted on the sand before Becky.

"Look, Mrs. Hendricks," she said, "I want to do some shopping. Will you come with me?"

"Please," Ivan added.

"Please," condescended Drusilla.

"Of course," Becky said delightedly. This was the first advance of any kind Drusilla had made toward her. She rose to her feet and brushed the sand from her feet.

Ivan understandingly reached for the twins, encircling them with an arm apiece. "I'll look after these," he said.

When they had gone through the club patio and on to the boardwalk, Becky put a friendly arm about Drusilla's shoulders. The girl slipped away, and Becky's arm went back to her side. Sadly she watched the child, trudging beside her. Drusilla's eyes seemed to be fascinated by her own bare toes exposed by Chinese sandals.

"It was just a bluff about me wanting to go shopping," Drusilla



announced. "I wanted to talk to you, Mrs. Hendricks."

Somehow that formal salutation hurt Becky more keenly than had anything else. "Well, Drusilla," she said calmly, although her heart lay dead inside her.

"Maybe you never heard about my mother," Drusilla began. Her brilliant dark eyes sought Becky's. They were so like her own.

Becky murmured something or other. Her heart had begun to beat again, jerkily—"never heard about my mother."

"My mother," Drusilla went on, "is a famous opera singer. I don't know which one, because she doesn't want me to know. But she still loves me and she still loves my father, and some day when she gets too old to sing any more she'll come back to us. My father thinks about her all the time. I can tell by his eyes. That's why I don't want you to get him!"

"Oh," Becky said weakly.

"You see," Drusilla went on quietly, "I know you're thinking about marrying him. You might even get him. He likes you a lot. But I want my own mother. You aren't the type."

Becky remembered. Automatically her hand went to her hair.

"Yes," Drusilla said, "I've read enough stories to know. Oh, you're all right in your way. And you're awfully good to your little boys. But you know my father's got a lot of money."

Careful, Becky. Don't talk. Don't say a word. A word will ruin it forever. This is what it's like to have your heart broken. Calm, Becky. Try the voice. It worked: "You're misjudging me, Drusilla."

They turned about in silence, back along the boardwalk, up the narrow side street to Becky's cottage.

"I'd run away," Drusilla said quietly. And that was all.

BECKY was white-faced and quivering as they came into the house. She disregarded Ivan, went immediately to where the twins, naked but for bright green trunks, lay attempting a free translation of the funny pictures.

"Petey and Pat," she said, rolling them over, "do you like mountains?"

They did, emphatically.

"Well," said Becky. "I think we'll go to the mountains."

"Becky," Ivan said, stricken, "you can't."

"I must," she corrected him.

He pulled her bodily from the floor and into the kitchen with him. Drusilla, her face white, her great eyes black, stood immobile as they passed her.

"Now," he said, closing the door. "You can't go, Becky. You can't leave me. What is it? Drusilla?"

She felt his warm hands on her arms. His eyes were filled with terror and with hunger for her.

"Oh, Ivan," she moaned. "She doesn't even like me."

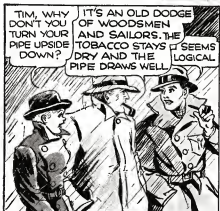
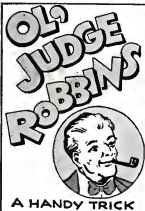
"Let me tell her, Becky. She'll accept you."

She shuddered and released her arms. "Oh, Ivan," she said.

He drew her again to him. "I know, Becky, help us!" he cried brokenly.

Ivan, who would not be told what tie to wear, asking for help. She found a smile.

The twins had gone complacently to sleep on the linoleum floor, their faces

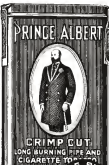


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rosy. But of Drusilla there was not a sign.

"They found her note on the table: 'Come to look at the moon and the sunrise.'"

"It's a child's handwriting, Ivan." Becky turned to him. "She's so strong that we forget she's only going on twelve."

She smiled. "We shouldn't permit her."

"Permit," he said. "Oh, Becky, if I'd been smarter she'd have known that the word 'permit' has a meaning."

"Well," she said. "I'll give you another ten years to train her. Help me with these small boys, will you? I must get them off to bed. We leave tomorrow morning."

"Really—not really, Becky?"

She forced herself to look away from his eyes, straightened her own wobbly chin. "Another ten years." . . .

IT WAS scarcely seven o'clock the next morning. The twins were already in their high chairs, giving complete attention to "Nice cereal—first one sees the picture on the bottom of the plate gets a raisin!"

Becky never tired of watching their busy fists at work, carrying awkward spoonfuls to eager mouths. The little maid was busy in the bedrooms with the packing.

"Becky!" Ivan's voice called suddenly from the living-room. "May I see you in here for a minute?"

She rose, startled. "Can you two gentlemen manage without me for a minute?" she asked Petey and Pat.

They thought they could. Ivan was pale. The gray was apparent in his thick brown hair. "Has Drusilla been here?" he wanted to know.

Becky sat down; the fingers of fear caressed her throat.

"No. Didn't she?"

"She didn't come back."

"Ivan, she hasn't run away?"

"I don't think so. If Drusilla ran away she'd let me know about it."

"Then what?"

"I don't know. Oh, Becky, dear, help me." He held out his hands and there was something so touching in his defenselessness, that she was in his arms, kissing him.

"Ivan, darling," he said, drawing away. Her cheeks were wet with his tears. "Will you stay with the twins? They will reconcile them to the fact that they're going to

stay at the seashore? Let me find her. And let me spank her when I find her."

He wanted to go along, she knew. But she resisted the unspoken request in his eyes. This was her errand. There would be some way to handle this, some way to bring this child of hers close. So she went down the warped sidewalk with her heart bounding high.

The beach. There were miles and miles of beach. Her eyes flickered across the sand, crazily studded with umbrellas. Drusilla would be on the beach. If she could, she would be breakfasting.

The bright ocean advanced, retreated, advanced, retreated, like a minuet dancer. It looked like a gay comrade, flirtatiously bowing in the sunlight. But the night ocean. Becky shuddered and turned away. Don't think about the ocean, Becky. . . . Well, then, think! . . . The police station. . . . She walked into the drugstore, consulted a telephone directory and left.

It was an artistic police station, done in the best Spanish-California style of white stucco and blooming window boxes. Inside were several policemen and one who looked as though he might be a captain or a chief or whatever they called them. Becky addressed him hesitantly: "Have you heard anything of a little girl?"

"What variety, ma'am?" he asked, smiling at her in a fatherly sort of fashion. She put her hands on his desk, smiled, and leaned forward. "Wearing white trousers, a bathing suit, and please heaven she has her sweater."

"Yes, ma'am, we've got her, and she's got her sweater." His smile faded. "Listen, ma'am," he said. "Who are you?"

"I'm her mother," Becky said, and the scarlet leaped to her face. "Great heavens!" she thought. "If I look so embarrassed, he'll think I'm not."

"Well, ma'am, she's been staying out all night on the beach. First time, we couldn't catch her. Last night we did. She wouldn't say where she belonged. Sort of stubborn. So we just locked her up. I'll get her out for you if you'll keep her in of nights."

"Yes," she promised. "I will."

He looked at her shrewdly and fished about on his desk for keys.

She followed him back into the neat little cell space, empty save for Drusilla. Becky caught a glimpse of her through the grating as he unlocked the door. Her face was white and red and tear-stained.

"Here's your mother to take you away," the officer announced.

Drusilla put a meek little hand into Becky's as they went out of the station.

The policeman called, "You mind now, or I'll put you away again."

They were both very silent walking back, but Drusilla did not release Becky's hand.

"You told him you were my mother," the child said suddenly.

"I . . ." Becky began.

"But you, aren't scolding. A mother would scold."

"Would she?" Becky said softly.

THERE was a faint pressure on her hand. Then Drusilla said, "I don't think I want my father to know I was in jail. Nobody in our family's ever been in jail."

"If you say not to I shan't tell him." Becky watched the intent little face, the dark brows gathered in thought.

"I guess I will tell him," Drusilla said. She lifted her bright, tear-marked eyes to Becky. "I guess I sort of learned a lesson. There are things I can't do, even if I want to. I couldn't have breakfast this morning."

"Well," Becky said slowly, summoning her wits. She must say the right thing. "You just figure out whether you can do the things you want to do without hurting somebody. And, if you can, fight all the time to do them. Everybody ought to fight for the things she wants."

There was another faint, understanding pressure of the little hand.

As they reached the cottage Drusilla stopped and put her head against Becky's side, encircling her with her arms.

"I'm sorry," she said. "You do act like a mother. You're nice."

Triumphantly Becky opened the door.

"Ivan!" she called, and all the sun was in her voice. "Drusy has a very interesting story to tell you, and then you and I have a story to tell Drusy. Petey and Pat, you play hide-and-seek in Mother's bedroom!"

## The RED Box

(Continued from page 15)

guess, his big nose and broad jaw which made his face too heavy even for his six feet.

"Anyhow, I'm much obliged to you, Mr. Goodwin." He sat down. "It was a big favor you did me, and I won't forget—"

"Wrong number." I waved him off. "I told you at the time, I keep all my favors for myself. I suggested that round robin only to try to drum up some business and as a scientific experiment to find out how many eggs it would take to jostle him loose. We haven't had a case that was worth anything for nearly three months." I got hold of a notebook and pencil, and swiveled around and pulled my desk-leaf out. "And, by the way, Mr. Frost, don't you forget that you thought of that round robin yourself. I'm not supposed to think."

"Certainly," he nodded. "Strictly confidential. I'll never mention it."

"Okay." I flipped the notebook open. "Now, for this murder you want to buy a piece of. Spill it." . . .

Wolfe was sore as a pup. He wasn't putting it on, either; he was in mental pain. Driving from his house on 35th Street near

the Hudson River—where he had lived for over twenty years and I had lived with him for nearly half of them—to the address on 52d Street, I handled the sedan so as to keep it as smooth as a dip's fingers.

From what Llewellyn Frost had told me the day before about the place of business of Boyden McNair, Incorporated—all of which had gone into my notebook and been read to Nero Wolfe Monday evening—I hadn't realized the extent of its aspirations in the way of class. We met Llewellyn Frost downstairs, just inside the entrance. It certainly was a swanky place.

The floor above was just as elegant. A long, wide corridor had doors on both sides at intervals, with etchings and hunting prints here and there on the wood paneling, and in the large room where we emerged from the elevator there were silk chairs and gold smoking stands and thick,

deep-colored rugs. I took that in at a glance and then centered my attention on the side of the room opposite the corridor, where a couple of goddesses were sitting on a settee. One of them, a blonde with dark blue eyes, was such a pronounced pippin that I had to stare so as not to blink, and the other one, slender and medium-dark, while not so remarkable, was a cinch in a contest for Miss Fifty-second Street.

The blonde nodded at us. The slender one said, "Hello, Lew."

Llewellyn Frost nodded back. "Lo, Helen. See you later."

As we went down the corridor I said to Wolfe, "See that? I mean, them? You ought to get around more. What are orchids to a pair of blossoms like that?"

He only grunted at me.

Frost knocked at the last door on the right, opened it, and stood aside for us to precede him. It was a large room, fairly narrow but long, and there was only enough letup on the elegance to allow for the necessities of an office.

Frost said, "Mr. Nero Wolfe. Mr. Goodwin. Mr. McNair."

THE man at the desk with carved legs got up and stuck out a paw, without enthusiasm. "How do you do, gentlemen? Be seated." Then he turned to Frost, "Well, Lew, you know I'm busy. Did you tell these gentlemen I agreed to give them fifteen minutes?"

Frost glanced at Wolfe and then looked back at McNair. He said, "I told them I had persuaded you to see them. I don't believe fifteen minutes will be enough—"

"It'll have to be enough. This is a busy season." McNair kept shifting in his chair. He went on, "Anyway, what's the use? What can I do?" He looked at Wolfe. "I promised Lew fifteen minutes. I am at your service until 11:20."

Wolfe shook his head. "Judging from Mr. Frost's story, I shall need more. Two hours or more, I should say."

"Impossible," McNair snapped. "I'm busy. Now, fourteen minutes."

"This is preposterous." Wolfe raised himself to his feet. He looked down at McNair, and said quietly, "I didn't need to come here to see you, sir. I did so in acknowledgment of an idiotic but charming gesture conceived and executed by Mr. Frost. I understand that Mr. Cramer, of the police, has had several conversations with you and that he is violently dissatisfied with the lack of progress in his investigation of the murder of one of your employees. Mr. Cramer has a high opinion of my abilities. I shall telephone him within an hour and suggest that he bring you—and other persons—to my office." Wolfe wiggled a finger. "For much longer than fifteen minutes."

He moved. Frost started after him.

"Wait!" McNair called out. "Wait a minute. You don't understand!"

Wolfe turned and stood.

McNair continued: "In the first place, why try to browbeat me? That's ridiculous. Cramer couldn't take me to your office, or any place, if I didn't care to go; you know that. Of course, Molly—of course, the murder was terrible—and naturally I'll do anything I can to help clear it up. But what's the use? I've told Cramer everything I know; we've been over it a dozen times. Sit down." He pulled a handkerchief from his pocket and

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DIRTY TRICK.**

MR. TRASK PROMISED ME THE JOB.  
NOW HE'S INTERVIEWING OTHER GIRLS!  
IF THAT ISN'T A DIRTY TRICK...

**THEN SHE FOUND HER NAME  
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TO : Office Manager  
FROM: Mr. Trask

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**JANET SEES HER DENTIST**

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**ONE MONTH LATER**

MR. TRASK SAYS  
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BEST SECRETARY  
HE EVER HAD,  
JANET!

THANKS, ANN!  
AND THANKS  
TO COLGATE'S!

**NO OTHER  
TOOTHPASTE  
EVER MADE  
MY TEETH  
SO BRIGHT  
AND CLEAN!**

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WHY let bad breath interfere with success—with happiness? It's so easy to be safe when you realize that by far the most common cause of bad breath is . . . *improperly cleaned teeth!*

Authorities say decaying food and acid deposits, in hidden crevices between the teeth, are the source of most unpleasant mouth odors—of dull, dingy teeth—and of much tooth decay.

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Be safe—be sure! Brush your teeth . . . your gums . . . your tongue . . . with Colgate Dental Cream at least twice daily and have cleaner, brighter teeth and a sweeter, purer breath. Get a tube today!

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LARGE SIZE  
Giant Size, over  
twice as much.  
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RIBBON DENTAL CREAM



wiped his forehead. "I'm going to have a breakdown. I worked fourteen hours a day getting the spring line ready, enough to kill a man, and then this comes on top of it. Sit down, won't you? Ten minutes is all you'll need for what I know, anyhow. That's what makes it worse, as I've told Cramer—nobody knows anything." And Lew Frost knows less than that." He glared at the young man. "You know damn well you're just trying to use it as a lever to pry Helen out of here." He transferred the glare to Wolfe. "Do you expect me to have anything better than the barest courtesy for you? Why should I?"

Wolfe had returned to his chair and got himself lowered into it, without taking his eyes off McNair's face. Frost started to speak, but I silenced him with a shake of the head. McNair pulled open the top right drawer of his desk reached in, and brought out a small bottle, shook a couple of aspirin tablets onto his palm, poured half a glass of water from a vacuum carafe, tossed the tablets into his mouth, and washed them down.

He looked at Wolfe and complained resentfully, "I've had a headache for two weeks. I've taken a ton of aspirin and it doesn't help any. I'm going to have a breakdown. That's the truth—"

**T**HERE was a knock, and the door opened. The intruder was a tall, handsome woman in a black dress with rows of white buttons. She said in a voice full of culture, "Excuse me, please." She looked at McNair. "That 1241 resort, the cashmere plain tabby with the medium oxford, will stripe—can that be done in two shades of Shetland with basket instead of tabby?"

McNair frowned at her and demanded, "What?"

She took a breath. "That 1241 resort—" "Oh, I heard you. It cannot. The line stands, Mrs. Lamont. You know that."

"I know, Mrs. Frost wants it." McNair straightened up. "Mrs. Frost? Is she here?"

The woman nodded. "She's ordering. I told her you were engaged. She's taking tone of the Portsmouth ensembles."

"Oh, She is." McNair had suddenly stopped fidgeting, and his voice, though still thin, sounded more under command. "I want to see her. Ask if I will suit her convenience to wait till I'm through here." "And the 1241 in two shades of Shetland—"

"Yes. Of course. Add fifty dollars."

The woman nodded, and departed. McNair glanced at his wrist watch, shot a sharp one at young Frost, and looked at Wolfe. "You can still have ten minutes." Wolfe shook his head. "I won't need them. You're nervous, Mr. McNair."

"What? You won't need them?"

"No. You probably lead too active a life, running around getting women dressed." Wolfe shuddered. "Horrible. I would like to ask you two questions: First, regarding the death of Molly Lauck, have you anything to add to what you have told Mr. Cramer and Mr. Frost? I know pretty well what that is."

"No," McNair was frowning. "No. Nothing whatever."

"Very well. Then it would be futile to take up more of your time. The other question: May I be shown a room where some of your employees may be sent to me for conversation? I shall make it as

brief as possible. Particularly Miss Helen Frost, Miss Thelma Mitchell, and Mrs. Lamont. I don't suppose Mr. Perren Gebert happens to be here?"

McNair snapped, "Gebert? Why the devil should he be?"

"I don't know." Wolfe lifted his shoulders half an inch, and dropped them. "I ask. I understand he was here one week ago yesterday, the day Miss Lauck died, when you were having your show. I believe you call it a show?"

"I had a show, yes. Gebert dropped in. Scores of people were here. About talking with the girls and Mrs. Lamont—if you make it short you can do it here. I have to go down to the floor."

"I would prefer something less—more humble. If you please."

"Suit yourself." McNair got up. "Take them to one of the booths, Lew. I'll tell Mrs. Lamont. Do you want her first?"

"I'd like to start with Miss Frost and Miss Mitchell. Together."

"You may be interrupted, if they're needed."

"I shall be patient."

"All right. You tell them, Lew?"

He looked around, grabbed his handkerchief from the desk and stuffed it in his pocket, and bustled out.

Llewellyn Frost, rising, began to protest, "I don't see why you didn't—"

Wolfe stopped him: "Mr. Frost. I endure only to my limit. Obviously, Mr. McNair is sick, but you cannot make that claim to tolerance. Don't forget that you are responsible for this grotesque expedition. . . . Where is this booth?"

"Well, I'm paying for it."

"Not adequately. You couldn't. Come, sir!"

Frost led us out and back down the corridor, and opened the door at the end on the left. He said he would be back soon, and disappeared. I moved my eyes. It was a small, paneled room with a table, a smoking stand, full-length mirrors, and three chairs.

Frost came in with two goddesses. I told him, "Go and get three bottles of cold light beer and a glass and an opener. We've got to keep him alive."

He lifted his brows at me. "You're crazy."

I murmured, "Was I crazy when I suggested that letter from the orchid guys? Get the beer."

He went. I negotiated myself into a chair, with the blonde pippin on one side and the sylph on the other.

Wolfe suddenly demanded, "You girls work here? They call you models?"

"That's right," said the blonde. "I'm Thelma Mitchell. This is Helen Frost."

Wolfe nodded, and turned to the sylph. "Why do you work here, Miss Frost? You don't have to. Do you?"

**H**ELEN FROST put level eyes on him. She said quietly, "My cousin told us you wished to ask us about—about Molly Lauck."

"Indeed," Wolfe said coldly, "Understand this, Miss Frost: I am a detective. Therefore, while I may be accused of incompetence or stupidity, I may not be charged with impertinence. However nonsensical or irrelevant my questions may seem to you, for me they may be filled with the deepest significance. That is the tradition of my profession. As a

matter of fact, I was merely making an effort to get acquainted with you."

Her eyes stayed level. "I am doing this as a favor to my cousin Lew. He didn't ask me to get acquainted. He asked me to answer questions about last Monday."

Wolfe snapped, "Only as a favor to your cousin? Wasn't Molly Lauck your friend? Wasn't she murdered? You aren't interested in helping with that?"

It didn't jolt her much. She swallowed again, but stayed steady. "Interested—yes. Of course. But I've told the police—I don't see what Lew—I don't see why you—" She stopped herself and jerked her head up and demanded, "Haven't I said I'll answer your questions? It's awful—it's an awful thing—"

"So it is," Wolfe returned abruptly to the blonde. "Miss Mitchell. I understand that at twenty minutes past four last Monday afternoon, you and Miss Frost took the elevator together, downstairs, and got out at this floor. Right?"

She nodded.

"And there was no one up here; that is, you saw no one. You walked down the corridor to the fifth door on the left, across the corridor from Mr. McNair's office, and entered that room, which is an apartment used as a restroom for the four models who work here. Molly Lauck was in there. Right?"

She nodded again. Wolfe said, "Tell me what happened."

**T**HE blonde took a breath. "Well, we started to talk about the show and the customers, and so on. We did that about three minutes, and then suddenly Molly said she forgot, and she reached under a coat and pulled out a box—"

"Permit me. What were Miss Lauck's exact words?"

The blonde stared at him. "Well, if I can. She said, let me see: 'Oh, I forgot, girls; I've got some loot. Swiped it as clean as a whistle.' While she was saying that she was pulling the box from under the coat—"

"Where was the coat?"

"It was her coat, lying on the table."

"Where were you?"

"Me? I was right there, standing there."

She was sitting on the table."

"Where was Miss Frost?"

"She was—she was across by the mirror, fixing her hair. Weren't you, Helen?"

The sylph merely nodded.

Wolfe said, "And then? Exact words."

"Well, she handed me the box and I took it and opened it, and I said—"

"Had it been opened before?"

"I don't know. It didn't have any wrapping or ribbon or anything on it. I opened it and I said, 'Gee, it's two pounds and never been touched! Where'd you get it, Molly?' She said, 'I told you; I swiped it. Is it any good?' She asked Helen to have some—"

"Her words."

Miss Mitchell frowned. "I don't know. Just 'Have some, Helen,' or 'Join the party, Helen'—something like that. Anyway, Helen didn't take any—"

"What did she say?"

"I don't know. What did you say, Helen?"

Miss Frost spoke without swallowing: "I don't remember. I had just had cocktails and I didn't want any."

The blonde nodded. "Something like

that. Then Molly took a piece and I took a piece—"

"Please," Wolfe wiggled a finger at her.

"You were holding the box?"

"Yes. Molly had handed it to me."

"Miss Frost didn't have it in her hands at all?"

"No, I told you she said she didn't want any. She didn't even look at it."

"And you and Miss Lauck each took a piece—"

"Yes. It was a mixture: chocolates, bonbons, nuts, candied fruits, everything. I took candied pineapple, and ate it. Molly put her piece in her mouth, all of it, and after she bit into it she said—the said it was strong—"

"Words, please."

"Well, she said, 'Holy Cats, it's two-hundred-proof, but not so bad. I can take it.' She made a face, but she chewed it and swallowed it. Then . . . well . . . you wouldn't believe how quick it was—"

"I'll try to. Tell me."

"Not more than half a minute, I'm sure it wasn't. I took another piece and was eating it and Molly was looking into the box, saying something about taking the taste out of her mouth—"

SHE stopped because the door popped open. Llewellyn Frost appeared, carrying a paper bag. I got up and took it from him, and extracted from it the opener and glass and bottles and arranged them in front of Wolfe. Wolfe felt of a bottle. "Umph. Schreiner's. It's too cold."

I sat down again. "It'll make a bead. Try it."

He poured.

Helen Frost was saying to her cousin, "So that's what you went for. . . . Your detective wants to know exactly what I said, my exact words, and he asks Thelma if I handled the box of candy . . ."

Frost patted her on the shoulder. "Now, Helen. Take it easy. He knows what he's doing . . ."

One bottle was empty, and the glass. Frost sat down. Wolfe wiped his lips.

"You were saying, Miss Mitchell, Miss Lauck spoke of taking the taste out of her mouth."

The blonde nodded. "Yes. And then—well—all of a sudden she straightened up and made a noise. She didn't scream—it was just a noise, a horrible noise. She got off the table and then leaned back against it, and her face was all twisted . . . it was . . . twisted. She looked at me with her eyes staring, and her mouth went open and shut, but she couldn't say anything; and suddenly she shook all over and grabbed for me and got hold of my hair . . . and . . . and . . ."

"Yes, Miss Mitchell."

The blonde gulped. "Well, when she went down she took me with her because she had hold of my hair. Then of course I was scared. I jerked away. Later, when the doctor—when people came—she had a bunch of my hair gripped in her fingers."

Wolfe eyed her. "You have good nerves, Miss Mitchell."

"I'm not a softy. I had a good cry after I got home that night; I cried it out. But I didn't cry then. Helen stood against the wall and trembled and stared and couldn't move—she'll tell you that herself. I ran to the elevator and yelled for help, and then I ran back and put the lid on the box of

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candy and held onto it until Mr. McNair came and then I gave it to him. Molly was dead, I could see that." She gulped again. "Maybe you could tell me. The doctor said it was some kind of acid, and it said in the paper potassium cyanide."

Low Frost put in, "Hydrocyanic. The police say—it's the same thing. I told you that. Didn't I?"

Wolfe wiggled a finger at him. "Please, Mr. Frost. It is I who am to earn the fee, you to pay it.—Then, Miss Mitchell, you felt no discomfort from your two pieces, and Miss Lauck ate only one?"

"That's all." The blonde shivered. "I held onto the box, but I got rid of it as soon as I saw Mr. McNair."

"Then, I understand, you ran away." She nodded. "I ran to the washroom." She made a face. "I had to throw up. I had eaten two pieces."

"Indeed. Most efficient." Wolfe had opened another bottle, and was pouring. "To go back a little: You had not seen that box of candy before Miss Lauck took it from under the coat?"

"No, I hadn't."

"What do you suppose she meant when she said she had swiped it?"

"Why—she meant—she saw it somewhere and took it."

Wolfe turned. "Miss Frost. What do you suppose Miss Lauck meant by that?" "I suppose she meant what she said—that she swiped it. Stole it."

"Was that customary with her? Was she a thief?"

"Of course not. She only took a box of candy. She did it for a joke, I suppose."

"Had you seen the box before she produced it in that room?"

"No."

Wolfe's half-shut eyes were on the blonde. "I believe you went to lunch that day with Miss Lauck. Tell us about that."

"Well—Molly and I went together about one o'clock. We were hungry, because we had been working hard—the show had been going on since eleven o'clock—but we only went to the drugstore around the corner, because we had to be back in twenty minutes to give Helen and the extras a chance. The show was supposed to be from eleven to two, but we knew they'd keep dropping in. We ate sandwiches and custard and came back."

"Did you see Miss Lauck swipe the box of candy at the drugstore?"

"Of course not. She wouldn't do that."

"Did you get it at the drugstore yourself and bring it back with you?"

MISS MITCHELL stared at him. She said, disgusted, "For heaven's sake! No!"

"You're sure Miss Lauck didn't get it somewhere while out for lunch?"

"Of course I'm sure. I was right with her."

"And she didn't go out again during the afternoon?"

"No. We were working together until half past three, when there was a letup and she left to go upstairs, and a little later Helen and I came up and found her there in the restroom."

"And she ate a piece of candy and died, and you ate two and didn't." Wolfe sighed. "There is of course the possibility that she had brought the box with her when she came to work that morning."

The blonde shook her head. "I've

thought of that. We've all talked about it. She didn't have any package. Anyway, where could it have been all the morning? It wasn't in the restroom, and there wasn't any place else."

Wolfe nodded. "That's the devil of it. It's recorded history. You aren't really telling me your fresh and direct memory of what happened last Monday, you're merely repeating the talk it has been resolved into.—I beg you, no offense; you can't help it."

He looked from one girl to the other. "You know, of course, what the problem is. Last Monday there were more than a hundred people here, mostly women but a few men. It was a cold March day and they all wore coats. Who brought that box of candy? The police have questioned practically all of them. They have also questioned everyone connected with this establishment. They have found no one who ever saw the box or will admit to any knowledge of it. No one who saw Miss Lauck with it or has any idea where she got it. An impossible situation!"

HE WIGGLED a finger at Frost. "I told you, sir, this case is not within my province. I can use a dart or a rapier, but I cannot set traps throughout the territory of the metropolitan district. Who brought the poison here? Whom was it intended for? I doubt if it is worth while for me to try even for the second half of your fee, since your cousin—your ortho-cousin—refuses to become acquainted with me. As for the first half, the solution of Miss Lauck's death, I could undertake that only through interviews with all of the persons who were in this place last Monday; and I doubt if you could persuade even the innocent ones to call at my office."

Low Frost muttered, "It's your job. You took it. If you're not up to it—"

"Nonsense. Does a bridge engineer dig ditches?" Wolfe opened the third bottle. "I assure you, sir, this problem is well within my abilities in so far as it is possible to apply them. In so far—for instance, take Miss Mitchell here. Is she telling the truth? Did she murder Molly Lauck? Let us find out." He turned and got sharp: "Miss Mitchell. Do you eat much candy?"

She drew her shoulders together, and released them. "Once in a while. I have to be careful. I'm a model."

"What is your favorite kind?"

"Candied fruits. I like nuts, too."

"You removed the lid from that box last Monday. What color was it?"

"Brown. A kind of gold-brown."

"What kind was it? What did it say on the lid?"

"It said . . . it said, *Medley*. Some kind of a medley."

Wolfe snapped, "Some kind? Do you mean to say you don't remember what name was on the lid?"

She frowned at him. "No . . . I don't. That's funny. I would have thought—"

"So would I. You looked at it and took the lid off, and later replaced the lid and held onto the box, knowing there was deadly poison in it, and you weren't even curious enough—"

"Now, wait a minute. Molly was dead and everybody was crowding into the room, and I was looking for Mr. McNair to give him the box, and certainly I wasn't trying to think of things to be curious about." She frowned again. "At that, it

is funny I didn't really see the name."

Wolfe nodded. He turned abruptly to Low Frost. "You see, sir, how it is done. What is to be deduced from Miss Mitchell's performance? Is she cleverly pretending that she does not know what was on that lid, or is it credible that she really failed to notice it? I am merely demonstrating. For another example, take your cousin." He switched his eyes and shot at her, "You, Miss Frost. Do you eat candy?"

The sylph leveled her eyes at him. "Yes, I eat candy. I much prefer caramels and, since I work as a model and have to be careful too, I confine myself to them."

"How often do you eat them?"

"Maybe once a week."

"You are very fond of them?"

She nodded. "Very." "You find it hard to resist them when offered?"

"Sometimes, yes."

"Monday afternoon you had been working hard? You were tired? You had had a short and unsatisfactory lunch?"

She was tolerating it. "Yes."

"Then, when Miss Lauck offered you caramels, why didn't you take one?"

"She didn't offer me caramels. There weren't any in that—"

"That is, I didn't suppose—"

"Suppose?" Wolfe's voice suddenly softened. "Miss Mitchell couldn't remember what was on the lid of that box. Can you, Miss Frost?"

"No. I don't know."

"Miss Mitchell has said that you didn't handle the box. You didn't even look at it. Is that correct?"

She was staring at him. "Yes."

"Miss Mitchell has also said that she replaced the lid on the box and kept it under her arm until she handed it to Mr. McNair. Is that correct?"

"I don't know. I . . . I didn't notice."

"No. Naturally, under the circumstances. But after the box was given to Mr. McNair, from that time until he turned it over to the police, did you see it at all? Did you have an opportunity to inspect it?"

"I didn't see it. No."

"Just one more, Miss Frost—this finishes the demonstration: You are sure you don't know what was on that lid? It was not a brand you were familiar with?" She shook her head. "I have no idea."

WOLFE leaned back and sighed. No one spoke; we just looked at him.

"There you are, Mr. Frost," he said quietly. "Even in a brief demonstration, where no results were expected, something is upturned. By her own testimony, your cousin never saw the contents of that box after Miss Lauck swiped it. She doesn't know what brand it was, so she could not have been familiar with its contents. And yet she knew, quite positively, that there were no caramels in it. Therefore: She saw the contents of the box, somewhere, some time, before Miss Lauck swiped it. That, sir, is deduction. That is what I meant when I spoke of interviews with all who were at this place last Monday."

Low Frost blurted, "You call this—what do you call this? My cousin—"

"I told you—deduction."

The sylph sat, pale, and stared at him. The Thelma Mitchell horned in: "She didn't say she knew positively there were no caramels in it. She only said—"

Wolfe put up a palm at her. "You being



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loyal, Miss Mitchell? For shame. The first loyalty here is to the dead. Mr. Frost dragged me here because Molly Lauck died. He hired me to find out how and why.—Well, sir? Didn't you?"

Frost spluttered, "I didn't hire you to play golf tricks with a couple of nervous girls. You fat imbecile—listen! I already know more about this business than you'd ever find out in a hundred years! If you think I'm paying you—Now what? Where you going? What's the game now? You get back in that chair! I say—"

Wolfe had arisen and moved around the table. Frost had jumped up and started the motions of a stiff arm at him.

I got upright and stepped across. "Subside, please. Come on, back up."

He gave me a bad eye, but let that do. Wolfe had sidled by, toward the door, and at that moment there was a knock on, and it opened and the handsome woman in the black dress with white buttons appeared. She moved in.

"Excuse me, please." She glanced around, and settled on me. "Mr. McNair says you wish to speak with me. I can give you a few minutes now."

I looked at Wolfe. He bowed to the woman. "Thank you, Mrs. Lahont. It won't be necessary. We have made excellent progress; more than could reasonably have been expected.—Archie. Did you pay for the beer? Give Mr. Frost a dollar. That should cover it."

I took out my wallet and extracted a buck and laid it on the table. A swift glance showed me that Helen Frost looked pale, Thelma Mitchell looked interested, and Llewellyn looked set for murder. Wolfe had left. I joined him outside.

I said, "That beer couldn't have been more than seventy-five cents."

He nodded. "Put the difference on his bill."

Downstairs we marched through the activity without halting. McNair was over at one side talking with a dark, medium-sized woman with a straight back and a proud mouth. I surmised it was Helen Frost's mother. Just before we got to the street door it opened and a man entered. I tossed him a nod. "Hi, Purley."

He stopped and stared, not at me, at Wolfe. "In the name of sanity! Did you shoot him out of a cannon?"

I grinned and we went on home . . .

THE first telephone call from Llewellyn Frost came around half past one, while Wolfe and I were doing the right thing by some sausage with ten kinds of herbs in it. Fritz Brenner, the chef and household pride, was instructed to tell Llewellyn that Mr. Wolfe was at table and might not be disturbed. I wanted to go and take it, but Wolfe nailed me down with a finger. The second call came a little after two, while Wolfe was leisurely sipping coffee, and I went to the office for it.

Frost sounded concerned and aggravated. He wanted to know if he could expect to find Wolfe in at two-thirty, and I said yes, he would probably be in forevermore. After we hung up I stayed at my desk and fiddled around with some things, and in a few minutes Wolfe entered.

He sat down at his desk, sighed happily, and looked around at the walls—the bookshelves, maps, Holbeins, more bookshelves, the engraving of Brillat-Savarin. After a moment he opened the middle drawer and

began taking out beer-bottle caps and piling them on the desk. He remarked, "A little less tarragon, and add a pinch of chervil. Fritz might try that next time."

"Yeah," I agreed, not wanting to argue about that. He knew I loved tarragon. "But if you want to get those caps counted you'd better get a move on. Our client's on his way down here."

"Indeed." He began separating the caps into piles of five. "Confound it, in spite of those three outside bottles, I think I'm already four ahead on the week."

"Well, that's normal." I swiveled. "Listen, enlighten me before Frost gets here. What got you started on the girl?"

HIS shoulders lifted a quarter of an inch and dropped again. "Rage. That was a cornered rat squealing. There I was, cornered in that insufferable hole, dragged into a case where there was nothing to start on. Or, rather, too much. Also, I dislike murder by inadvertence. Whoever poisoned that candy is a bungling ass. I merely began squealing." He frowned at the piles of caps. "Twenty-five, thirty, thirty-three. . . . But the result was remarkable. And quite conclusive. It would be sardonic if we should earn the second half of our fee by having Miss Frost removed to prison. Not that I regard that as likely. . . . I trust, Archie, you don't mind my babbling."

"No, it's okay right after a meal. Go ahead. No jury would ever convict Miss Frost of anything, anyhow."

"I suppose not. Why should they? Even a juror must be permitted his tribute to beauty. But if Miss Frost is in for an ordeal I suspect it will not be that. Did you notice the large diamond on her finger? And the one set in her vanity case?"

I nodded. "So what? Is she engaged?"

"I couldn't say. I remarked the diamonds because they don't suit her. You have heard me observe that I have a feeling for phenomena. Her personality, her reserve—even allowing for the unusual circumstances—it is not natural for Miss Frost to wear diamonds. Then there was Mr. McNair's savage hostility, surely as unnatural as it was disagreeable, however he may hate Mr. Llewellyn Frost—and why does he hate him? More transparent was the reason for Mr. Frost's familiarity with so strange a term as 'ortho-cousin,' strictly a word for an anthropologist, though it leaves room for various speculations. Ortho-cousins are those whose parents are of the same sex—the children of two brothers or of two sisters; whereas cross-cousins are those whose parents are brother and sister. In some tribes cross-cousins may marry, but not ortho-cousins. Obviously Mr. Frost has investigated the question thoroughly. Certainly it is possible that none of these oddities have any relation to the death of Molly Lauck, but they are to be noted, along with many others. . . . I hope I am not boring you, Archie. I talk chiefly because if I do not you will begin to rustle papers to annoy me, and I do not feel like being irritated—but there's the bell. Our client. Ha! Still our client, though he may not think so."

Footsteps sounded from the hall and, soon again, returning. The office door opened and Fritz appeared. He announced Mr. Frost, and Wolfe nodded and requested beer. Fritz went.

Llewellyn came bouncing in. He came

bouncing, but you could tell by his eyes it was a case of dual personality. Back behind his eyes he was scared stiff. He began talking like a man who was already late for nine appointments:

"I could have told you on the phone, Mr. Wolfe, but I like to do business face to face. I owe you an apology. I flew off the handle and made a fool of myself. I want to apologize." He put out a hand.

Wolfe looked at it, and then up at his face.

Frost took his hand back, flushed, and went on, "You shouldn't be sore at me; I just flew off the handle. And, anyway, you must understand this—that was nothing up there. Helen—my cousin was just flustered. I've had a talk with her. That didn't mean a thing. But naturally she's all cut up—she already was, anyhow—and we've talked it over, and I agree with her that I've got no right to be butting in up there. So I appreciate what you've done, and it was swell of you to go up there when it was against your rule. . . . so we'll just call it a flop, and if you'll just tell me how much I owe you . . ."

Wolfe surveyed him. "Sit down, Mr. Frost."

"Well . . . just to write a check. . . ." He backed into a chair and got out a check folder. "How much?"

"Ten thousand dollars."

He gasped and looked up. "What!" Wolfe nodded. "Ten thousand. That would be about right for completing your commission; half for solving the murder of Molly Lauck and half for getting your cousin away from that hellhole."

"But, my dear man, you did neither." His eyes narrowed. "Don't think you're going to hold me up. Don't think—"

Wolfe snapped, "Ten thousand dollars. And you will wait here while the check is being certified."

"You're crazy." Frost was spluttering again. "I haven't got ten thousand dollars. My show's going big, but I had a lot of debts and still have. And even if I had it—what's the idea? Blackmail?"

"Please, Mr. Frost. I beg you. May I speak?"

Llewellyn glared at him.

WOLFE settled back in his chair. "Before you definitely hired me to undertake an investigation you should have scrutinized the possibilities. But the point is that you hired me; and, let me tell you, you burned all bridges when you goaded me into that mad sortie to Fifty-second Street. That will have to be paid for. You and I are bound by contract; I am bound to pursue a certain inquiry and you are bound to pay my reasonable charge. And when, for personal and peculiar reasons, you grow to dislike the contract, what do you do? You come to my office and try to knock me out of my chair by propelling words like 'blackmail' at me! Pfu! The insolence of a spoiled child!"

He poured beer, and drank.

The client spoke: "But look here, Mr. Wolfe. I didn't agree to let you go up there and . . . that is . . . I didn't have any idea you were going . . ." He stopped on that, and gave it up. "I'm not denying the contract. I didn't come here and start throwing brickbats. I just asked, if we call it off now, how much do I owe you?"

"And I told you."

"But I haven't got ten thousand dollars,

not this minute. I think I could have it in a week. But even if I did, just for a couple of hours' work—"

"It is not the work," Wolfe wiggled a finger at him. "It is simply that I will not permit my self-conceit to be bruised by the sort of handling you are giving it. It is true that I hire out my abilities for money, but I assure you that I am not to be regarded as a mere peddler of gawgaws or tricks. I am an artist or nothing. I know you are young, and your training has left vacant lots in your brain; you don't realize how offensively you have acted."

"For heaven's sake!" The client sat back. "Well," He looked at me as if I might suggest something, and then back at Wolfe. "All right, you're an artist. You're it. I've told you, I haven't got ten thousand dollars. How about a check dated a week from today?"

Wolfe shook his head. "You could stop payment. I don't trust you; you are incensed; the flame of fear and resentment is burning in you. Besides, you should get more for your money, and I should do more to earn it. The only sensible course—"

THE ring of the telephone interrupted him. I swung around to my desk and got it. I acknowledged my identity to a gruff male inquiry, waited a minute, and heard the familiar tones of another male voice. What it said induced a grin. I turned to Wolfe: "Inspector Cramer says that one of his men saw you up at McNair's place this morning and nearly died of the shock. So did he when he heard it. He says it would be a pleasure to discuss the case with you a while on the telephone."

"Not for me. I am engaged."

I returned to the wire and had more talk. I turned to Wolfe again: "He'd like to stop in at six o'clock to smoke a cigar. He says, to compare notes. He means, S O S."

Wolfe nodded.

I told Cramer okay, and rang off.

The client had stood up. He said with no belligerence at all, "Was that Inspector Cramer? He—he's coming here?"

"Yeah, a little later," I answered, because Wolfe had closed his eyes. "He often drops around for a friendly chat when he has a case so easy it bores him."

"But he . . . I . . ." Llewellyn was groggy. He straightened up. "Listen. I want to take that phone."

"Help yourself. Take my chair."

I vacated and he moved in. He started dialing without having to look up the number. I stood and listened.

"Hello, hello! . . . That you, Styce? . . . This is Lew Frost. Is my father still there? . . . Yes, please. . . . Hello, Dad? Lew. . . . No. . . . No, wait a minute. Is Aunt Callie still there? . . . Waiting for me? Yeah, I know. . . . No, listen. I'm talking from Nero Wolfe's office, 918 West 35th Street. I want you and Aunt Callie to come down here right away. . . . There's no use explaining on the phone; you'll have to come. . . . Now, Dad, I'm doing the best I can. . . . Right."

Wolfe's eyes were still closed. . . . That conference was a lulu. Dudley Frost was one of the very few people who have sat in that office and talked Nero Wolfe to a frazzle. Of course, he did it more by volume than by vigor, but he did it.

It was after three when they got there. Fritz ushered them in. Calida Frost,

Helen's mother, Lew's Aunt Callie—though I suppose it would be more genteel to introduce her as Mrs. Edwin Frost, since I never got to be cronies with her—she came first and, sure enough, she was the medium-sized woman with the straight back and proud mouth. She was good-looking and well made, and you wouldn't have thought she was old enough to be the mother of a grown-up goddess. Dudley Frost, Lew's father, weighed two hundred pounds, from size rather than fat. He had gray hair and a trimmed gray mustache.

Llewellyn went to the office door and brought them across and introduced them. Dudley Frost rumbled at Wolfe, "How do you do?" He gave me one too: "How do you do?" I was getting chairs under him. He turned to our client: "What's all this now? What's the trouble, son? . . . I was hoping to get in some bridge this afternoon. What's the difficulty? My son has explained to me—and to Mrs. Frost, my sister-in-law—we thought it best for him to come straight down here—"

Llewellyn blurted at him, "Mr. Wolfe wants ten thousand dollars."

He cackled. "God bless me, so do I. Though I've seen the time—'but that's past.' He gazed at Wolfe. "What do you want ten thousand dollars for, Mr. Wolfe?"

Wolfe looked grim, seeing already that he was up against it. He said, "To deposit in my bank account."

"Ha! Good. I asked for it. I should have said, for what reason do you expect to get ten thousand dollars from anyone, and from whom do you expect it? I hope not from me, for I haven't got it. My son has explained to us that he engaged you tentatively—tentatively for a certain kind of job in a fit of foolishness. My son is a donkey, but surely you don't expect him to give you ten thousand dollars merely because he's a donkey? I hope not, for he hasn't got it, either. Nor has my sister-in-law—have you, Calida? What do you think, Calida? Shall I go on with this?"

Mrs. Edwin Frost was looking at Wolfe. She said in a low, pleasant tone, "I think the most important thing is to explain to Mr. Wolfe that he jumped to a wrong conclusion about what Helen said." She smiled at Wolfe. "My daughter Helen. But first, since Lew thought it necessary for us to come down here, perhaps we should hear what Mr. Wolfe has to say."

WOLFE aimed his half-shut eyes at her. "Very little, madam. Your nephew commissioned me to perform an inquiry. I no sooner began it than he informed me it was a flop and asked me how much he owed me. I told him, and on account of the unusual circumstances demanded immediate cash payment. In a panic, he telephoned his father."

Her brow was wrinkled. "You asked for ten thousand dollars?"

Wolfe inclined his head, and raised it. "But Mr. Wolfe." She hesitated. "Of course I am not familiar with your business"—she smiled at him—"or is it a profession? But surely that is a remarkable sum. Is that your usual rate?"

"Now, see here." Dudley Frost had been squirming in his chair. "After all, this thing is simple. There are just certain points. In the first place, the thing was purely tentative. In the second place, figure Mr. Wolfe's time at twenty dollars an hour, and Lew owes him forty dollars.

I've paid good lawyers less than that. In the third place, there's no sense in talking about ten thousand dollars, because we haven't got it." He leaned forward and put a paw on the desk. "That's being frank with you, Mr. Wolfe. My sister-in-law hasn't got a cent, no one knows that better than I do. Her daughter—my niece—has got all that's left of my father's fortune. My son seems to think he has got something started, but he has thought that before. I doubt if he could collect, but of course the only way to settle that is a lawsuit. Then it could drag along, and eventually you'd compromise on it—"

OUR client had called on him several times—"Dad! . . . Dad!"—in an effort to stop him, but with no success. Now Llewellyn reached across and gripped his father's knee. "Listen to me a minute, will you? If you'd give me a chance—Mr. Wolfe isn't letting it drag along! Inspector Cramer is coming here at six o'clock to compare notes with him. About this."

"Who the deuce is Inspector Cramer?"

"Head of the Homicide Bureau."

"Oh, that chap. How do you know he's coming here? Who said he was?"

"He telephoned. Just before I phoned you. That's why I called you."

I saw the glint in Dudley Frost's eye, as swift as it was, and wondered if Wolfe caught it too. He asked his son, "Who talked to Inspector Cramer? You?"

I put in, brusque, "No. Me."

"Ah." Dudley Frost smiled at me broadly, with understanding. "You seem to have gone to a good deal of trouble around here. Of course, I can see that that was the best way to get your threat in, to arrange for a call with my son in your office. But the point is—"

Wolfe snapped, "Put him out, Archie."

I laid the pencil and notebook on the desk and got up. Llewellyn rose and stood like a pigeon. "I noticed that all his aunt did was lift one brow a little."

Dudley Frost laughed. "Now, Mr. Wolfe. Sit down, boys." He goggled at Wolfe. "God bless me, I don't blame you for trying to make an impression."

"Mr. Frost." Wolfe wiggled a finger. "Your suggestion that I need to fake a phone call to impress your son is highly offensive. Retract it, or go."

Frost laughed again. "Well, let's say you did it to impress me. I must admit I am impressed. This is what it looks like: Mr. Wolfe wants ten thousand dollars. If he doesn't get it he intends to tell Inspector Cramer that Helen has said she saw that box of candy before Molly Lauck did. Of course, Helen didn't tell him that, but that won't keep the police from tormenting her, and possibly the rest of us." He turned to goggle at his son. "It's your fault, Lew. Absolutely. You offered this man Wolfe his opportunity. Haven't I told you time and time again—"

Wolfe turned to Mrs. Frost. "Please. Stop him."

She shrugged her shoulders. Then she asked quietly, "What is this about Inspector Cramer?"

Wolfe shifted to her. "Nothing, madam, beyond what your nephew has told you."

"He is coming here to consult with you?"

"So he said."

"Regarding the death of Miss Lauck?"

"So he said."

"Isn't that—?" She hesitated. "Is it





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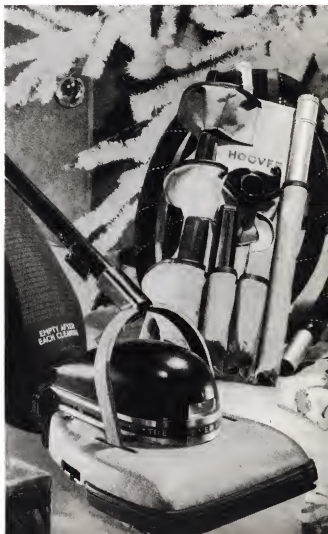
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usual for you to confer with the police about the affairs of your clients?"

"It is usual for me to confer with anyone who might have useful information," Wolfe glanced at the clock. "Let's see if we can't cut across, Mrs. Frost. It is ten minutes to four. I permit nothing to interfere with my custom of spending the hours from four to six with my plants. As your brother-in-law said with amazing coherence, this thing is simple. I do not deliver an ultimatum to Mr. Llewellyn Frost, I merely offer him an alternative. Either he can pay me at once the amount I would have charged him for completing his commission and dismiss me, or he can expect me to pursue the investigation to a conclusion and send him a bill. Of course, it will be much more difficult for me if his own family tries to obstruct."

MRS. FROST shook her head. "We have no wish to obstruct," she said gently. "But it is apparent that you have misconstrued a remark my daughter Helen made while you were questioning her, and we . . . naturally, we are concerned about that. And then . . . if you are about to confer with the police, surely it would be desirable for you to understand . . ."

"I understand, Mrs. Frost," Wolfe glanced at the clock. "You would like to be assured that I shall not inform Inspector Cramer of my misconstruction of your daughter's remark. I'm sorry I can't commit myself on that, unless I am either dismissed from the case now with payment in full or am assured by Mr. Llewellyn Frost—and, under the circumstances, by you and your brother-in-law also—that I am to continue the investigation for which I was engaged. I may add, you people are quite unreasonably alarmed. It is highly unlikely that your daughter has any guilty connection with the murder of Miss Lauck; and if by chance she possesses an important bit of information which discretion has caused her to conceal, the sooner she discloses it the better, before the police do somehow get wind of it."

Mrs. Frost was frowning. "My daughter has no information whatever."

"Without offense—I would need to ask her about that myself."

"And you . . . wish to be permitted to continue? If you are not, you intend to tell Inspector Cramer—?"

"I have not said what I intend."

"But you wish to continue?"

Wolfe nodded. "Either that, or my fee now."

"Listen, Calida. I've been sitting here thinking." It was Dudley Frost. He sat up straight. I saw Wolfe get his hands on the arms of his chair. Frost was going on: "Why don't we get Helen down here? This man Wolfe is throwing a bluff. If we're not careful we'll find ourselves coughing up ten thousand dollars of Helen's money. Lew says he'll have it next week, but I've heard that before. A trustee is under the most sacred obligation to preserve the property under his care, and it couldn't be paid out of surplus income because you can't leave any surplus. The only way is to call this fellow's bluff."

Wolfe shoved back his chair and got up, and spoke loud enough to penetrate the Dudley Frost noise:

"I must go. Thank God. You can tell Mr. Goodwin your decision." He started his progress to the door, and didn't halt when Dudley Frost called at him:

"Now, here! You can't run away like that! All right!" His target gone, he turned to his sister-in-law: "Didn't I say, Calida, we'd call his bluff? See that? All it needs in a case like this—"

Mrs. Frost hadn't bothered to turn in her chair to witness Wolfe's departure. Llewellyn had reached across for another grip on his father's knee and was expostulating. "Now, Dad, listen a minute—"

I stood up and said, "If you folks want to talk this over I'll leave you alone."

Mrs. Frost shook her head. "Thank you, I don't believe it will be necessary." She turned to her nephew and sounded crisp: "Lew, you started this. It looks as if you'll have to continue it."

Llewellyn answered her, and his father joined in, but I paid no attention as I got at my desk and stuck a sheet of paper in the typewriter. I dated it at the top and tapped it off:

To Nero Wolfe:

Please continue until further notice the investigation into the murder of Molly

Lauck for which I engaged you yesterday, Monday, March 30, 1936.

I whirled it out of the machine, laid it on a corner of Wolfe's desk, and handed Llewellyn my pen. He bent over the paper to read it. His father pulled at him:

"Don't sign that! What is it? Let me see it! Don't sign anything at all—"

LLEWELLYN surrendered it to him, and he read it through twice, with a frown. Mrs. Frost stretched out a hand for it and ran over it at a glance. She looked at me: "I don't believe my nephew will have to sign anything . . ."

"I believe he will." I was about as fed up as Wolfe had been. "One thing you people don't seem to realize, if Mr. Wolfe should feel himself relieved of his obligation to his client and tells Inspector Cramer his angle on that break of Miss Frost's, there won't be any argument about it. When Cramer has been working on a popular murder case for a week without getting anywhere, he gets so tough he swallows cigars whole. Of course, he won't use a piece of hose on Miss Frost, but he'll have her brought to headquarters and snarl at her all night. You wouldn't want—"

"All right." Dudley Frost had his frown on me. "My son is willing for Wolfe to continue. But he won't sign this. He won't sign anything—"

"Yes, he will." I took the paper from Calida Frost and put it on the desk. "What do you think? You're three and I'm one. That's no good in case of bad memories. What is there to it, anyhow? It says, 'until further notice.' Mr. Wolfe said you could tell me your decision. Well, I've got to have a record of it or, so help me, I'll have a talk with Inspector Cramer myself."

Lew Frost looked at his aunt and his father, and then at me. "It certainly is one sweet mess." He grimaced in disgust. "If I had ten thousand dollars this minute, I swear . . ."

I said, "Look out; that pen drips sometimes. Go ahead and sign it."

While the other two frowned at him, he bent over the paper and scrawled his name.

(To Be Continued)

## GREEN HILLS far away

(Continued from page 51)

a Protest, and anybody who didn't agree with us was a "Bobbitt."

It's all water under the bridge now, and why we went isn't very interesting any more. Some of us were escapists, some idealists, some perhaps in the journalistic group were simply following our natural orbits; but we all know now that it was

merely "green hills far away," that we were merely "going somewhere else," like Ma Kilmer.

Why we came back, however, is perhaps more interesting, more important, and my same old Ma Kilmer, I think, may help us answer this point, too. The main answer is simple enough. Europe today, as much as in the Middle Ages, despite its smashed thrones and new experiments, is still shut from top to bottom with its old, all-pervading caste system, which is completely alien to American tradition and ideals and which I hope will always remain alien. We have come a long way from pioneer, rail-splitting days and tallow candles, but I like to believe that Ma Kilmer and what she stands for are still as much the essence and backbone of this country as ever was Nancy Hanks. Here in America, in 1936, she is still as American

as Abe Lincoln's suspenders, a field of corn, or the dome of our capital.

In Europe—and make no mistake about it—Ma Kilmer would be a peasant; and I think I can best begin to pile up all the thoughts I mean to imply by that if I tell you about some one-time friends of mine on the old Toulon water front, who were superficially a good deal like Ma Kilmer. My wife and I had been living all winter in an old warehouse on the *quai* and had made friends with our neighbors. There was a bright, warm-hearted, fat old fishwife named La Bolue who became quite fond of me because I used to go out with her husband on the sardine boats.

But one fine morning a wealthy American woman who owns one of the largest and most magnificent pleasure yachts in Europe, warped into our harbor and tied up for the week end. My wife and I were

invited aboard for tea, cocktails, and what not.

Our presence on the yacht was noted by La Bolue's family and my good friends down on the *quai*, and when next I sought their amiable companionship they were cold, suspicious, antagonistic. I had become in their eyes spurious, a snob, a slummer. None of them, not even Mamma La Bolue, good old soul, could be simple and friendly any more.

The contrast between their psychology and Ma Kilmer's is not a shading contrast. It is total and complete. Ma Kilmer knows that I occasionally get invited to tea and cocktails in the mansions here on the big estates along the river whose marble halls she may have scrubbed when she was younger. And her psychology about it is that she has none. She simply does not give a tinker's damn. I am sure she must sometimes think of people in terms of good-bad, honest-dishonest, successful-unsuccessful, rich-poor, agreeable-disagreeable, but I am equally sure she could never seriously think of herself or anybody in the terms my French friends did.

NOR could John, my American gardener. I'm sure he never has, and if he ever did—I mean, if he ever got the magical mumbo-jumbo suspicion that I was in some socially hierarchical way superior to himself as a human being, I'd get the suspicion on my side that he was servile and corrupt, and no longer want him around the place.

In Marseilles, France, I had a gardener whose name was Violand. It happens that there are many superficial points of likeness in the two men. Both are small in stature, robust, past middle age, good gardeners, self-respecting according to their different lights, both of them likable, both friendly. They are similar, as gardeners go, yet totally different as human beings.

The nearest I can come to pinning it down is that all of Violand's psychology implied that in some way—perhaps because of money, schooling, or a tweed coat—I was, in some magical yet definite way, of a world higher than his world and consequently to be ranked among his "betters." Now, John's psychology and his reactions imply strongly at all times not only that he never thinks I am in some mysterious way his "better," but that he doesn't see life in those terms at all.

By this simple contrast between two gardeners, I am asserting, of course, that the famous *Liberté, égalité, fraternité* of the French is purely academic, purely political. I do assert it, and while asserting it I will hop across the English Channel to assert that all of our own European British cousins likewise, high and low, are equally caste-cooped. They all still think in terms of my Marseilles gardener and my Toulon fishwife.

The last time I stopped a while in London I played around with a British novelist whom I had better call Wilfred Paine for the purpose of this true, tragic little picture. His name, of course, is not Paine, but it has the same vowel sound, and the petty tragedy of my friend's otherwise happy and successful life is that he cannot always trust himself to pronounce it! When he is harassed or nervous he will say over the telephone, "This is Mr. Pine," and when he is drinking a bit too much, as the best of novelists occasionally do, he will sometimes call for a tankard of "pile



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isle." For this, which proves him as sterling native British as John Bull, but reveals the fact that he was born of the "lower classes," he is punished continually and cruelly by all his fellow Britons.

Although a distinguished novelist and a pleasant, well-mannered man, he can never be elected to a gentleman's club nor even escape, in his own home, from the veiled contempt of his wife's elderly maid, who once served the real gentry. His life, and his wife's, too, have been clouded and embittered.

If you visit with an open mind any of the revolutionary countries in Europe to study Fascism, Hitlerism, or any of the new isms, you will soon discover that wherever old feudal caste lines are being smashed, they are being replaced with rigid new ones. Nowhere is there anything like our homely, plain American democracy.

Go live in Germany a while and you'll soon see the same paradoxical retrogression toward the opposite of individual human liberty. They have swapped the Kaiser for Hitler and changed *Hock to Heil*, but they still go in for the goose step, for regimentation, and for a new feudal All Highest.

The Russian setup presents, to me as a free American, the same striking paradox. In the old czarist days all land, wealth, and power were owned by a special group who would starve you, send you to the salt mines in Siberia, or kill you, if you didn't act and think as they ordered. A selfish tyranny, no doubt. Today, in Soviet Russia, all land, wealth, and power are owned by a new special group who will starve, exile, or kill you if you don't act and think as they wish. It is perhaps an idealistic and unselfish tyranny. But the old Russian regime and the new Russian regime are equally tyrannical.

WHILE Europe is trying all these new Utopian or dictatorial experiments, here in America old Ma Kilmer up the road and I on my nine acres can still do and think pretty much what we damned well please unless we turn actually criminal or crazy.

This, then, is the real reason why I have come back to my own country. Every adult human being does, or should, prize liberty more highly than cooking, comfort, pleasure, or a table on the boulevard.

But while I like to ascribe my return to the above noble sentiment, I can think of a million petty reasons why I would have come home, anyway.

I don't like cold roast, or vegetables boiled to death in plain water as you get them always inevitably in England, nor do I like all my food to taste of hot olive oil and garlic as it always does in Italy; but I dislike the way things were in France with even more intensity, because I lived there a good many years longer. By France, I suppose I really mean Latin Europe, the Mediterranean Riviera, whether French, Spanish, or Italian.

My mother, who lived and died in an American small town, had a deep-rooted certainty that all Italians, Frenchmen, Spaniards were different from us.

I felt that my mother was provincial and prejudiced. After I had gone on a walking trip through France and Italy, had learned to speak both French and Italian with decent fluency, and had begun to go back to Europe whenever I could on vacations, I was still sure that my mother was provincial and prejudiced. It was only

after I went to live in a French small town between Toulon and Marseilles and became a part of its life that I became convinced my mother had been right.

Most native Europeans, in what I have defined as the American expatriate zone, consume wine constantly and habitually as a commonplace alimentary staple, as we consume bread; they use quantities of garlic, cook in olive oil, and consider butter at table to be a special thing you order, like olives or stuffed celery. We thought it was wonderful, or pretended we did, for a while, but the plain fact is that Americans never have habitually consumed wine as an alimentary staple, never eaten vast quantities of garlic, cooked in olive oil, and ordered butter at table as a special dish, and in the long run doing so made some of us drunkards and most of us dyspeptic.

WHEN I think of the luncheons over there I wonder that any of us came back alive. You begin with enough sardines, anchovies, cold ham, salami, liverwurst, hard-boiled eggs in mayonnaise, and beets in vinegar and olive oil to constitute a hearty American businessman's lunch; then, despite the sardines, you have a substantial fish course or an omelet or spaghetti, and inevitably the roast, a leg of lamb or a chicken. You drink various wines in quantity, sustaining your false appetite, so that you can go on through a vegetable course or two served separately, followed by ice cream or a tart. Then the table is cleared for assorted cheeses, fruits, nuts, brandy, and cordials. They can stand it. Their stomachs are different. An American can't stand it for long. It makes you drunk and sleepy and gives you gastritis.

The Frenchman doesn't get sleepy. It is not merely that his stomach is different. It is because he is keyed differently. The casual name of a camel, a disagreement about a salad dressing, a bicycle collision in which nobody is hurt, will cause him to scream and wave his arms in real life as stage Frenchmen do in vaudeville. If you mention the casual name of a camel with a personal implication, even to a tough chauffeur the size and shape of Jack Dempsey, he will inevitably start screaming and waving his fists. He will not strike you.

But even if he is a small man, if you come at him with an ax already bloody with the life gore of his brother, or start shooting at him at close range with a couple of .45 automatics, it seems to cool and calm him. He becomes quiet, collected, efficient, cool, dangerous, and formidable. It would not be too much to say that he becomes heroic without indulging in heroics. Clemenceau said bitterly that the Frenchman is courageous, heroic only on the battlefield. He was the best soldier in the World War and he has been more or less hysterical about his neighbors and world politics ever since.

Now, we American expatriates could laugh or sneer at people keyed like that, and also give them unstinted, deep, real admiration, but we could never be like them nor at home among them. We are simply not keyed that way. We are calm about salad dressings and get quite excited when people start murdering us with axes.

These differences in stomachs and temperaments are perhaps only matters of nerve tension. But I am convinced that the souls of Europeans are different, too. By souls I don't mean things that float on

clouds or are saved by Salvation Army bands. I mean the integrated essences of their natures with reference to concrete things, such as money and women.

Let's consider the money first. While we have one of the worst crime records of any country for murders, burglaries, bank robberies, embezzlements, and graft of millions, we don't go in for petty cheating the way they do over there. Whether we are soda-water jerkers, small clerks, petty proprietors, bartenders, hot-dog purveyors, on Fifth Avenue or Tenth Avenue in New York, or in a general store at a crossroads in Saluda County, South Carolina, or near Spokane, Washington, we don't usually bother to peel an extra three cents or a nickel off people who speak with a foreign accent or drive an expensive car.

In Europe, I thought for quite a while—in fact, for several years—that they made a habit of overcharging only foreigners, preferably American, English, and German. It was only after I had slowly begun to know them that I discovered the provincial Frenchman will too often just as willingly cheat the Parisian, and vice versa, or any man or woman who is obviously of a different social or economic class from himself and his usual customers.

I used to lose my temper sometimes and feel that it was more contemptible than burglary or highway robbery, not merely because it was more petty, but for the reason that I couldn't shoot the thief or hit him in the face or even have him arrested. As a matter of fact, I couldn't even make him blush or take it seriously, because, by his psychology, what he was doing was simply shrewd business. He thinks he's an honest man.

I beg leave to differ with him, but I make haste to add that he is often, too, by any standards, a charming, delightful, and sometimes absurdly generous fellow. Frequently, when he begins liking or knowing you pretty well he stops cheating you.

WHEN my wife and I moved into that warehouse loft on the Toulon water front, we began going pretty regularly to the corner café, kept by a Madame Rippert, who charged us two francs each for coffee and rolls. One day when I pushed her four francs as usual, with the usual small tip in coppers, she pushed some of it back to me and said, with a wry, amiable grin, "It's not two francs; it's one franc fifty."

What happened at Madame Rippert's some weeks later was as gorgeously French as *The Marseillaise*. It was the night of the Fourteenth of July, which is like our Fourth. We had John Goss, the concert baritone, down in Toulon as our guest and took him, with some other friends, to our little corner café. He and these other friends were obviously British, prosperous, and strangers. Madame Rippert, who had long since stopped cheating us out of pennies for coffee and beer, charged us outrageous tourist prices for mediocre champagne and fireworks.

We stayed there late, and when things got quieter John Goss sang a while. It happened he had been studying old Provencal ballads and serenades, and presently he sang some of them, including *Magali Ma Tant Amado*. Madame Rippert burst into yowls, sobs, and tears, embraced him, kissed my wife, rushed back to the bar, and returned with two bottles of the best and most expensive *Cordon Rouge* "on

the house." Not content with that, she raided what was left of her own stock of fireworks and set them off at a feverish rate which would have soon burned up all of her holiday profits if we hadn't calmed her. She was magnificent, and never cheated us any more. We still send each other post cards.

A while ago, instead of another picture of the fleet, she sent us a post-card photograph of little Rose Marie, her pet niece, who was just beginning to toddle when we left Toulon in 1932. She stares at you out of the picture with big, bold, made-up baby eyes, *Folies-Bergère* curls, dressed in the ghastly fashion most French mothers inflict upon their female children. This family post card illustrates my own mother's profound conviction that the French attitude toward the female of the species is different from our own.

IT TOOK me a very long time, living in France, to figure out that my mother was intuitively right on this point, too. I am sure there is a profound and basic difference, and I think I know what it is. It is that the average Frenchman, by tradition and race, regards every human female between the ages of six and sixty as primarily a woman. He may be, and often is, a man with the strictest personal code of morals, but his mind is so turned that he sees every woman he meets casually, every woman who passes in the street, as an attractive, or unattractive, female object.

Well, now, I think that the typical American man, no matter how much of a Lothario he may fancy himself to be, does not, all the time, traditionally and automatically, view all women except his grandmother in this way. A great deal of the time he automatically and traditionally regards them primarily as people, as human individuals, nice or not nice, attractive or unattractive to himself, for reasons which have nothing remotely to do with their being females. I think he even often regards the girl he is in love with, or has just married or just kissed, as primarily a human being, and I doubt that any Frenchman ever does.

My old Ma Kilmer, who inspired this piece, is not what you might call pretty, but she is a lulu as "people." And, to sum it all up, the reason I have come back to America, multiplying it by a million, is that here, as in no other land on earth, we treat each other as people, "of, for, and by," as Abe Lincoln said. Over there, I'd have paid for all Ma Kilmer's gasoline and she'd have been respectful.

\*\*\*\*\*

## "I WANT A MAN!"

THE three best letters in response to the young business woman who wrote *I Want a Man* (August, 1936) were written by:

First, \$25.00—Miss R. L. Starkweather, East Orange, N. J.

Second, \$15.00—Miss Ruth Wilson, Louisville, Ky.

Third, \$10.00—Mrs. Goldie Dee, Columbus, Ohio.

# How Will You SLEEP TONIGHT?

WILL YOU  
LIE AWAKE  
LIKE THIS



OR WILL YOU  
DROP OFF QUICKLY  
LIKE THIS



*If there's any doubt, try this natural drugless way  
that helps so many get to sleep quickly <sup>NIGHT</sup>*

DO you dread to go to bed at night for fear you'll lie awake and toss? And does the morning find you fagged and hollow-eyed—with jumpy nerves, and vitality at low ebb?

Thousands who formerly had this experience have found a simple, drugless way to avoid the toll of sleepless nights. And report that they fall asleep each night almost as soon as they go to bed.

They do this by drinking Ovaltine just before they retire at night.

Ovaltine is a pure food concentrate. It was originally created in Switzerland as a strengthening food-drink for invalids, convalescents, and the aged.

Then physicians observed that, when Ovaltine was taken as a hot drink just at bedtime, it also produced unusual results in promoting sound, restful sleep. And, in thousands of cases, it was found that people who took it, not only slept more restfully—but they also felt much fresher next day.

### How Its Results Are Explained

**First:** As a hot bedtime drink, Ovaltine tends to draw excess blood away from the brain. This mental calm is invited—the mind is "conditioned" for sleep.

**Second:** Ovaltine, on account of its ease of digestion, gives the stomach a light digestive task to perform. Thus helping to do away with that hollow, restless

feeling that keeps so many people awake.

**Third:** It has also been observed that Ovaltine not only helps to bring sound sleep quickly, but, in many cases, helps to improve the *quality* of sleep. That is why so many users report they awaken in the morning so greatly refreshed—looking and feeling like different people as the result of the sound and restful sleep they've had.

### Start Tonight

So if you have trouble getting to sleep—or feel listless and logy when you wake up mornings—we urge you to give Ovaltine a trial tonight. You may be surprised at the difference it makes in the way you *look and feel*.

Phone your grocer or druggist for a tin of Ovaltine now. Mix 3 to 4 teaspoonfuls of it with a cup of hot milk and drink it just before you get into bed tonight. See if you don't fall asleep more easily than you usually do—see if you don't sleep more *soundly*.

When you get up in the morning, take stock. See if your nerves aren't steadier—and if you don't feel far *fresher*, too.

**NOTE:** Ovaltine is now made in America by The Wander Company, 180 No. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Illinois. It is *inexpensive to serve—and can be obtained at all grocery, drug, and department stores.*

*CONFIDENCE... that the best  
will always find favor*



*TRUE*, there are many worthy whiskies today—but there's only *one* Paul Jones!

Today, did we say? That has been true for over 70 years!

Our family, from the beginning, has steadfastly refused to depart from the slow, old-fashioned American method of distilling this noble whiskey—confident that men who *know* whiskey will always cherish the forthright qualities for which Paul Jones has been famed for more than three generations.

Paul Jones is *all* whiskey—*every drop*. And we believe its richer, full-flavored mellowness will tell you that you've found one of America's truly *great* whiskies.



*A GENTLEMAN'S WHISKY*  
SINCE 1865



Frankfort Distilleries, Inc., Louisville  
& Baltimore, makers of Four Roses  
(94 proof), Old Oscar Pepper (90  
proof), Mattingly & Moore (90 proof)  
—all blends of straight whiskies.



*Paul Jones*

A BLEND OF STRAIGHT WHISKIES

— 92 PROOF



# America's INTERESTING PEOPLE



PHOTOGRAPH BY GABRIEL NOLIN FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

HE'S the boss of America's "littlest business," a mass producer of jots, tittles, and iotas. Rollin J. Lobaugh, of San Francisco, makes screws that measure six one-hundredths of an inch in diameter and turns out washers fifteen one-thousandths of an inch thin. Has a hard time keeping his commodities out of his eyes. Once a railroad fireman, ambitious to become a locomotive engineer, Lobaugh quit and became a smidgeneer instead, manufacturing the tiniest parts used in radios, motorcars, and airplanes. His stock went

like a dust storm. As a Henry Ford of Lilliput, he found leisure to become a locomotive engineer, after all. Now he runs a room full of miniature trains, modeled to the minutest detail after equipment of the nation's great systems. Prides himself on his models of historic engines. Last summer a large Western railroad commissioned him to make a tiny replica of its crack limited for exhibition at the Dallas, Texas, Centennial. Some of his little locomotives run by steam and take water from an eyedropper.

# HOSTESS

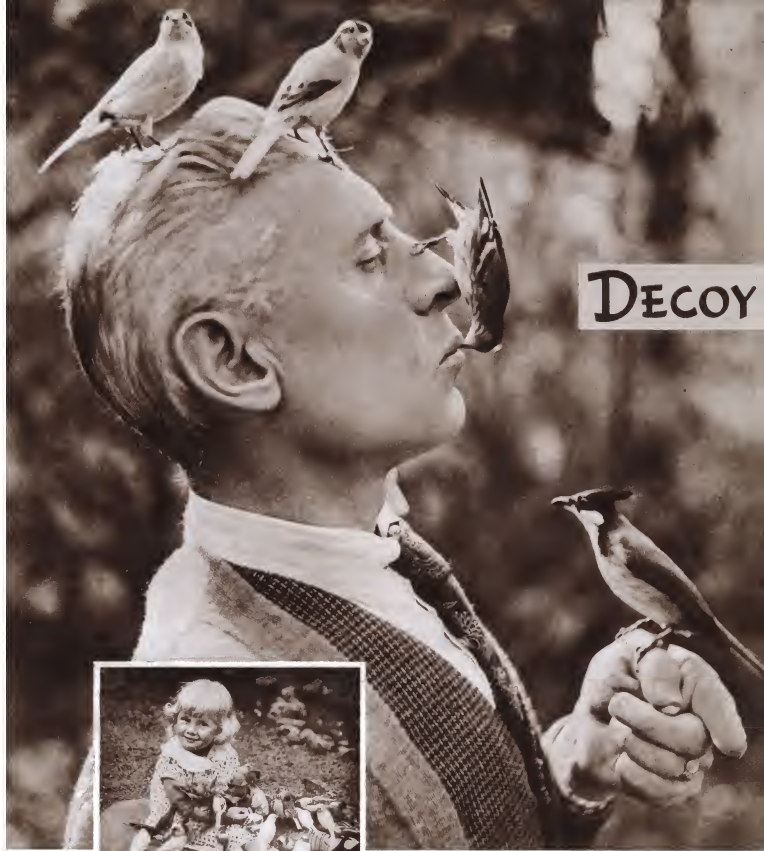


PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROLA RUST FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

DR. ELIZABETH MUNGER is the guiding spirit of the nation's strangest finishing school. No tuition is charged and the entrance requirements are negative. The million-dollar dormitory is new and modern, and each girl is given a bright little room with bed, bureau, and pretty coverlets—without cost. All the students change for dinner, which is served at small tables covered with neat linen, doilies, and set with flowers. A staff of 71 instructors teach shorthand, typing, English, handicrafts, and do-

mestic science. Entertainments are given twice a week, and hikes and picnics are planned year-round by the students. Delightful? Perfectly—even though it is the Niantic, Conn., state prison for women, of which Dr. Munger is warden. It has no walls, guards, alarms, or silence rules. The girls don't want to escape, even if they are obliged, part of each day, to work in the bakery, cannery, hospital, kitchen, or truck gardens. Dr. Munger believes that every woman will be good and industrious if she has the chance.

# DECOY



PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANCIS DICKIE FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

HE'S the Pied Piper of birdland. Charles E. Jones, of Vancouver, B. C., Canada, owns the most unusual bird sanctuary in the world. It's right in his own back yard. His hundreds of songsters follow him everywhere. The siskin sits on his nose and turns upside down (as in the photograph) to peck morsels from between his

lips. A meadow lark rolls on its back and spars with his finger. Jones is the first person on record to tame wild songbirds and feed them by hand.

Seven years ago, recovering from a serious illness, he adopted a nest of newly hatched bullfinches and fed each one individually. Today the yard is clouded with birds. Jones operates under a special government permit, and is planning a dominionsanctuary, where children, like the little girl shown here, may give tea parties for their feathered friends.



## DOODADDER

PHOTOGRAPH BY ZOLTAN D. FARKAS FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

MRS. JOSEPHINE SHACKMAN probably is a silent hostess at all your parties. She invented the crackers and paper hats for your dinner party, the Jack Horner pie for the children's Christmas frolic (you pull a ribbon and pluck out a present), and the groups of tiny carol singers on the market this year. She has devised more doodads and furbelows for parties than any woman in America—and has never patented one. They're just happy thoughts, she says, in which everyone should share. Her first

success was a paper pumpkin for Halloween. Simple, but nobody had thought of it before. Then she invented a stork thermometer for newlyweds, which tells how many children may be expected. Silly, but it sells. This year Mrs. Shackman turned her attention to political parties and turned out New Deal donkeys and Square Deal elephants, made of glass. Travels the U. S. and visits European markets for stimulation. She works so hard helping people play that she has little time for parties herself.





## MADCAP

PHOTOGRAPH BY RUDOLF H. HOFFMAN FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

HERE'S a little girl who won't stay put. Bet her she can't climb a telephone pole, and up she goes, hand over hand. Collects road signs as a hobby. Favorite sport is roaring down the Atlantic coast in a speedboat, looking for uninhabited islands. Simply loves to drive an open car in a rainstorm for 200 miles or more. Her funny-paper capers and comic grimaces recently won her an important part in the Broadway hit, *New Faces*, and a contract to appear in a new musical comedy now being written. Nobody

would suspect that this young woman, Jean Bellows, is the daughter of the late George Wesley Bellows, famous artist, that she was the model for his painting, *Lady Jean*, and stands in the foreground of many of his finest landscapes. Not content with hanging forever on the wall, a demure figure in immortal oil, Jean studied dancing and dramatic art, then broke out into Broadway. Here, she's been looking at her father's sketches of his little girl. Can you tell what she thinks? No matter what it is, she's really a sketch.





## STEEPLEJILL

PHOTOGRAPH BY WILL CORRELL FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

CHERIE MAY, of Los Angeles, is the world's best-looking steeplejack. Clad in overalls, she creeps among black girders at cloudy altitudes, a rivet hammer in one hand, a compact in the other. Will scramble up twenty stories of steel framework at sight of a mouse, but doesn't hesitate to ride the derrick down. Repairs roller coasters, polishes weather vanes, paints flag masts, and rigs radio towers, stopping often to powder her nose when the wind is high. Warns woo-some fellow workers to watch their step and never

fall for her. Mrs. May earns \$25 a day and uses it to support four generations of her family—grandmother, mother, invalid husband, and children. She never tells her two young sons to stay out of apple trees. Formerly a parachute jumper, she taught her oldest son, Eugene, to follow in her wing-steps when he was three years old. He bailed out twice before kindergarten. Her own first jump—in a home-stitched parachute—landed her in the midst of 300 beehives. She's afraid of nothing except dogs—big and small.



# ANGEL

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAN C. BAKER FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

THIS "underpaid professor" has just given California's Stanford University a splendid new half-million-dollar building for its School of Education. A teacher there for 38 years, Dr. Ellwood Cubberley led classes of future college presidents and deans in the way they should go, telling them that character-building, not money-making, is the object of education. Meanwhile, he made a hobby of studying the stock market (sometimes investing scientifically). Dividends rolled in. Royalties from 18 textbooks increased

his income. Not long ago he woke up rich—and conscience-stricken. Without children or relatives who needed money, he decided to give it all to Stanford. With Mrs. Cubberley he excitedly drew up plans for a new education building and began to collect books for the library. When school opened this year Dr. Cubberley's greatest lecture was embodied in stone on the campus. He has retired from teaching and intends to use the rest of his fortune amassing the world's finest educational library at Stanford.



# SANTAS

PHOTOGRAPH BY ALTON HALL BLACKINGTON FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

OUT of his thousands of competitors, from tiptoeing parents to crimson-clad saints in toy shops, Santa Claus considers these two airmen his only real competitors. Through the long, expectant hours of Christmas Eve and morning, Captain William Wincapaw, of Boston, and his son, Bill, go flying over the housetops—lighthouse-tops—along 2,000 miles of bleak New England and Canadian shore, dropping presents. The good little boys and girls are the lighthouse keepers and their families, whose shining lamps often

guided the captain to safety when he was a commercial pilot in Maine. For three Christmases Captain Wincapaw made the trip alone, a trifle in his 2,000,000 miles and 18,000 hours flown. For the last five years, Bill, 17, has been the Yuletide bomber, dropping 12-pound, shock-proof bundles of books, tobacco, coffee, and toys on jutting lighthouse rocks, while his father handles the controls. Santa, Jr., seldom misses. His father's fledgling now, Bill will qualify for a transport license on his next birthday.

# Shaving Oddities



## BEARD TAX!

DURING THE REIGN OF QUEEN ELIZABETH OF ENGLAND A LAW WAS PASSED TAXING BEARDS OVER TWO WEEKS OLD! TODAY, IF IT WEREN'T FOR GEM MICROMATIC BLADES, MANY TENDER-SKINNED MEN WOULD RATHER PAY A BEARD TAX THAN SHAVE!

## EGYPTIAN SOCIAL REGISTER!

IN ANCIENT EGYPT THE SIZE OF A MAN'S BEARD INDICATED HIS SOCIAL RANK! BUT TODAY, GEM MICROMATIC BLADES GIVE YOU CLEAN-SHAVEN, ALL-DAY NEATNESS THAT HELPS YOUR BUSINESS AND SOCIAL STANDING.



## BALANCED TEAM!

ONLY THE GEM MICROMATIC RAZOR HAS THE FACE-FITTING BEVEL THAT FORCES YOU TO SHAVE WITH THE MASTER BARBER'S SMOOTH STROKE. ONLY GEM HAS THE PATENTED DUAL-ALIGNMENT THAT LOCKS THE BLADE RIGID, ENDING OFF-ANGLE SCRAPES.

BUT ONLY A GENUINE GEM BLADE CAN MAKE YOUR GEM RAZOR 100% EFFICIENT! TRY THIS BALANCED TEAM. GET A NEW \$1.00 GEM RAZOR WITH 5 BLADES FROM YOUR DEALER. OR SEND 25¢ WITH COUPON FOR SPECIAL TEST SET WITH STANDARD \$1.00 GEM RAZOR AND 2 BLADES AND INTRODUCE YOUR FACE TO MODERN SHAVING COMFORT!



## SIZZLE SHAVE!

SOME SOUTH AFRICAN SAVAGES BURN OFF THEIR WHISKERS WITH SULPHUR PASTE! IF YOUR FACE FEELS FIERY AFTER SHAVING, CHANGE TO GENUINE GEM BLADES AND ENJOY COOL REFRESHING SHAVES.



HERE'S WHY GEM CAN GUARANTEE YOU PERFECT SHAVING EDGES—WHY GEM BLADES NEVER IRRITATE YOUR FACE! THEY'RE MADE OF 50% THICKER STEEL ... HONED FOR 3 MILES ... STROPPED 4840 TIMES TO MAKE THEM EXTRA SHARP. THEN EACH BLADE IS INDIVIDUALLY INSPECTED UNDER LAMPS SO POWERFUL THAT THE SLIGHTEST DEFECT SHOWS UP LIKE A BEACON-LIGHT!



## SPECIAL OFFER

Gem Division, American Safety Razor Corp.  
Dept. A38, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Enclosed find 25¢ for complete trial Gem set with a single- and a double-edged blade and the regular \$1.00 gold-plated Gem Micromatic Razor.

PRINT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STREET \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_

(If you live in Canada, write Mutual Feltz Co., 636 Wellington St., W., P. O. Box 11, 1901 Toronto, 2, Canada)

**GEM**  
MICROMATIC  
**RAZOR and BLADES**

# You can hardly BELIEVE IT

(Continued from page 45)

enough really. Tonneau: body. Hydrocarbon: gasoline. Phaeton: a car with lines similar to the horse-drawn phaeton. Canopy: cloth top. Propeller: steering handle or lever. Refrigerator: radiator. Mud-splasher: fender.

My researches indicate that men were not even agreed, at the turn of the century, on what to call the new vehicle. That we today call it motorcar or automobile or machine, or usually just car, is largely accidental. Here are some of the terms then used: gas-rig, buggyaut, automob, autogondola, autoface, autodrome, autobaine, gasoline buggy, horseless carriage, electromobile, the electric, the steamer, the steamcar, the motorcycle (for a car, not motorcycle), and viamote. The staid *London Times* suggested combining motor and vehicle into "molec."

Motorists were called by all combinations of those names; also autoneers and bunnies. The names they were called by the embattled farmers were unprintable, as were the names the autoneers called the farmers who charged them \$10 for hauling the "pushmobile" out of a prefabricated mudhole.

Prophets of that day tried to grapple with the future of the motor carriage. Some said it was a passing fad; some predicted it would rival the bicycle in popularity; some admitted it would play a large part in hauling and commercial transportation and as a toy for wealthy and reckless sportsmen, but never as a pleasure vehicle.

ONE of the boldest prophets was one J. H. Knight, who wrote, in 1896: "In the motor carriage we have a conveyance that will not tire and should in time be made so powerful as to run at fair speed in the face of a gale of wind." He envisioned a car that would carry 2 passengers, 50 pounds of baggage, petroleum for 30 to 40 miles, and run at 15 miles an hour, 7 miles an hour against the wind.

But in that same year the learned M. Marcel Desprez, of the Institute of France, sounded a timely warning. The new motor vehicles, he pointed out, would exhaust quickly the available oil supplies stored in the earth. And that, Grace remarked, must have been a good prophecy; people have been making it ever since.

The enemies of the horseless carriage seized on a prediction that the auto would "simplify the problem of street cleaning," an indication that numbers of street cleaners would be thrown out of work. But came one George E. Latham with the prediction that trackless traction would bring

a demand for chauffeurs and mechanics and would one day attract "hundreds" of young men.

When I showed Mr. Latham's prediction to Grace she just pointed to a report in the evening paper showing that today 6,017,000 men and women are employed directly or indirectly in the automobile industry.

It was the age of individualism in auto construction. Some built their own hydrocarbon rigs from stem to stern; others bought the engine and installed it in their own equipage, hitching it to the wheels with a chain. An advertisement which I found stated: "WE SUPPLY THE CART; You Do The Rest. From \$200 up, with excellent space for any make of motor. Good tank room, and child's seat in front. Special 2-inch tires on 34- or 36-inch enameled, ball-bearing wheels. Hub steering. Finish to suit."

The individualistic design of motors made the autoneer's life one of surprises. When Mr. George Flori, of St. Louis, stepped proudly into his new motor vehicle and drove it away, he discovered that when he twisted the steering wheel to the left, the car went to the right, and vice versa.

IN ONE snappy three-cylinder job it was impossible to tell, when you started it, whether it would go forward or backward. Apparently it had one speed forward and three in reverse. Grace suggested that the inventor was ahead of his time; today we could use such a feature for beating the other fellow into a parking space.

One stylish model which had its engine on the rear axle was cranked from behind by pulling a long strap attached to a ratchet pulley which automatically rewound itself.

The chain drive I found was the usual thing, but the rope-drive eliminated the clutch. It functioned by tightening or loosening the rope. The rawhide drive wore better than the rope-drive.

Apparently the electric was considered most convenient in town, the gasoline cars for touring, the steamers for heavy duty and hill climbing. There were also a few cars powered by compressed air, springs, alcohol, kerosene, carbonic acid, and ether, but these did not do so well.

One unpleasant tendency in the early cars was to run backwards downhill. Some of the brakes were on the motor; and therefore useless if the chain broke, others braked only the forward, not the backward motion. So frequent were the backward runaways that the *New York Times* called attention to the need for "the sprag—the iron rod suspended from the rear axle to hold the car on a hill if the brakes slip."

Grace and I wondered what any one of the several brake inspectors we met on our trip would have said if our car had been sprag-equipped.

Along in 1903 the motor began advancing beyond the status of a sportsman's toy, as was indicated by the following from one of our leading periodicals:

"One of the indications of a tendency toward practical usefulness rather than mere sport is the number of carriages fitted with canopy tops, storm curtains, and removable plate-glass fronts."

About that time motorists were experimenting with the new "acetylene searchlights," mostly imported from France, and

a debate was on whether the proper warning signal was the bell, the horn, or the whistle.

Such fripperies, of course, did not come with the car when you bought it. Lights, tops, horns, "plate-glass fronts," storm curtains, and the rest could be purchased through your dealer or ordered from Europe. The car as delivered had little more than motor, wheels, and tonneau.

Sometimes the auxiliary equipment cost almost as much as the car. After the dealer had strapped on, screwed on, and nailed on as many accessories as you could afford, he would deliver your car, usually by dray, for the cautious dealer did not like to drive the car to your house, for fear of a breakdown on the way.

Then your adventures began.

Automobile advertising men, when they devised a slogan in those days, had to be sure it couldn't be turned against them. One car had the slogan: "Built to Run, and Does It." A customer added a question mark—"and Does It?" Another car advertised: "Nothing to watch but the road." An owner wrote in that he was tired of watching the same piece of road. A manufacturer bragged of the lightness of his car, built with "wooden wheels, wooden axles, wooden frame." A malcontent shipped his back with the comment: "Wooden run."

This "delightful uncertainty" of the cars of the "founding fathers" was just one of the motorist's worries. What is so hard to realize today is the hostile world in which the motorist lived. The people, the laws, the roads, the very animals were leagued against him. The autoneer who took the road not only—as Grace pointed out to me—had to be a mechanic but also had to be prepared for arrests, riots, and fights. If he caused a runaway, however innocently, he might be mobbed. Horsemen sometimes cut him across the face with a whip. "Yokels" and "roughs" threw mud and stones. "Get a horse!" was the cry. Police, farmers, and innkeepers regarded him as fair game for extortion.

WHY all the hatred of the new vehicle?

Partly envy: Most automobilists were wealthy men in those days. Partly fear of the strange and unknown: The men who ran these vehicles, swathed in their huge coats, goggles, and dust masks, looked like a race apart. Partly vested interests of all those who made a living from the horse: livery-stable men, carriage makers, coachmen, hostlers, horseshoers, harness makers, feed merchants, veterinarians.

The enemies of the auto constantly emphasized the nobility of the horse, man's best friend. The partisans of the auto struck back in the trade magazines:

"The horse, about which so much poetry and gush have been written . . . a willful, unreliable brute . . . the driver of the horse, constantly holding up his hand for the motor to stop, in fact begs his way through the world."

"The motor vehicle will not shy or run away. Parasols, flying newspapers, wheelbarrows, strange noises and surprises, are powerless to move the pulses of its iron heart."

Brave words, those, but of little avail or cheer to the bubbler who, having killed a dog or cow, found himself confronted by an angry farmer with a shotgun. One of



# Start the picture record *Christmas Day*



## *Give a Kodak*

**SIX-20 BROWNIE**—The old reliable brought up to date. Diway lens for sharp pictures of near and distant subjects. Two extra-large finders. Smart, morocco-grain covering. Decorative etched metal front. Makes  $2\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$ -inch pictures. Price, only \$3. Six-16 Brownie,  $2\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$ , \$3.75.

**JIFFY KODAK SIX-20**—Touch a button—"Pop"—it opens. Touch another—"Click"—it gets the picture. Etched metal front, black morocco-grain covering. Two reflecting finders. Pictures  $2\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$  inches. Price, \$8. Jiffy Kodak Six-16,  $2\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$ , \$9.

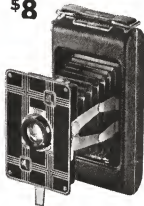
**KODAK JUNIOR SIX-20 (f.6.3)**—Brings you a fine, fast Kodak Anastigmat lens (f.6.3) at an extremely moderate price. Makes snapshots ( $2\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$  inches) on dull days—indoors at night with Kodak "SS" Film and Mazda Photoflood bulbs. Price, \$13.50. With Doulhet lens, \$10. Kodak Junior Six-16,  $2\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$ , \$15.50 and \$12.

**CINÉ-KODAK EIGHT**—Brings home movies within the reach of almost every one. Low in cost—makes 20 to 30 black-and-white scenes on a film costing \$2.25, finished, ready to show. Movies at 10¢ a shot! And for a few cents more each scene, Kodachrome full-color movies. Ciné-Kodak Eight, with f.3.5 lens, \$34.50.

**\$3**



**\$8**



**\$13.50**



**\$34.50**



See these and other Eastman cameras at your dealer's. Brownies from \$1; Kodaks from \$5... Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, N. Y.

the unappreciated wonders of today is the way in which domestic animals have adjusted themselves to the automobile. (Grace says if I would adjust myself, now, everything would be dandy.)

In the early days the horse, of course, gave the most trouble. Sometimes the motorist spent half his time in stopping for horses and helping to lead them by. If there were a runaway he might be held liable for damages to person or property caused thereby. Sometimes the owner of the horse was as much scared as his animal. Mr. W. Ashley Gray, of St. Louis, wrote of an experience in Missouri. He met an old farmer and his wife driving a team of horses. Mr. Gray stopped, got out, and offered to help the farmer get his team past the auto.

"If you can lead the old lady by, I can handle the team," said the farmer.

An Iowa genius, in 1902, submitted a plan for ending all this trouble between autos and horses. He suggested that a lifelike dummy of a horse, made of some light material such as papier-mâché, be suspended in front of every gasoline buggy to disarm the suspicions and calm the fears of real horses met along the way. The idea was widely discussed but, so far as I can learn, the papier-mâché horses never went into quantity production.

Some cautious motorists carried lump sugar for the horses, carrots for the cows, and bones for the dogs, when planning an excursion into the country.

**B**UT if they got safely by the animals, the laws were waiting for them. Every town had its laws, some of them for the special enrichment of the treasury. Some had speed limits as low as 4 miles an hour (New York motorists counted it a great gain when the Bailey law of 1903 forbade any town to have a speed limit of less than 8 miles per hour). Other laws made it an offense to pass a pedestrian or a horse-drawn vehicle at more than a certain speed.

(Grace says all this dope is no good when a modern cop says, "Stop obstructing traffic. You're only making 35.")

In most states cars were not allowed on ferryboats. Cars were barred from many roads, parks, and cemeteries. An automotive funeral, in those days, would have seemed as incongruous as a cortege of calliopes or tandem bicycles.

In the late nineties the Federal Commissioners in Washington barred motor wagons from the streets of the national capital, on the ground that they would frighten horses, endanger life and property.

More hazardous to the motorist than laws, however, more terrifying than the anger of men or the fright of beasts, were

the American roads of the era. The roads were so bad that many well-to-do Americans kept their cars in France, traveling thither for a motor tour each summer. Some experts said that America was too vast and untamed a country ever to build up a civilized road system. Yet, as Grace sagely remarks, we have somehow succeeded in building up 400,000 miles of paved roads, the finest system in the world.

With few exceptions the American roads, outside the cities, were dirt. Heavy with dust in the summer; muddy, slippery, deeply rutted in the rain; almost impassable to motorcars in the winter. Shovel, block and tackle, and a towline were standard equipment for a tour.

Roads abounded in bumps, holes, gullies, and hairpin turns. Since they were meant for horses, a stream or creek was seldom bridged if it could conveniently be forded. A foot or so of water, more or less, was easy for the horse and buggy. For the panting, balky, and eccentric grandpappy of the modern motorcar, however, every crossing was high adventure.

Roads were not numbered in those days. Signposts were few and often confusing. Speedometers had not yet educated Americans in the matter of mileage. And road maps couldn't be had for the asking at gas stations. The countryman knew little of roads except in his immediate neighborhood, and what he knew he might not tell to the man who had been frightening the wits out of the livestock.

The wise motorist, therefore, usually carried a compass and a huge book of complicated directions issued by his automobile club. The directions read something like this:

"Turn left at the watering trough on the square, then right, around the Methodist Church. Proceed two miles, to fork at red barn. Bear right, unless it has been raining recently, in which case route to left, though longer and rougher, will be

safer. Go on three miles, watching for boulders just over crest of hill by the big oak tree. Approaching the village of Wilson, be on your watch for the constable. Gasoline may be obtained at the drugstore opposite the railroad station, but be sure to strain it through chamolis filter."

When I read that one I remembered that everywhere we went on our trip we found ten gas stations for every drugstore and that it was always easy to get dependable gas put in our tank by station attendants who did everything but wash our faces for us.

When it rained the horseless carriage slithered through the mud. When it was dry—ah, then came the dust.

**I**T WAS the dust, and not innate perversity, which caused the motorists to wear the garments that alienated them from the rest of mankind. Dust and cold. The auto, before the windshield with its plate-glass front (and of course that was before the closed car with its safety glass) came into use, required almost arctic costume in chilly weather. The autoer spent a great deal of time, thought, and money on his clothes, as did the autoerress.

Listen to the fashion advice of 1902 from a great authority on motoring costume for ladies:

"How can a woman keep herself warm in winter and not be suffocated with the dust in summer, without making herself very unattractive?

"A long, double-breasted coat falling to the ground, with a leather waistcoat attached to it underneath, lined and trimmed with opossum. A blue Gengarry cap, pinned in one or two places to give it height.

"A veil, varied from gauze in summer to a long, gray Shetland cloud in winter. Gray doesn't show dust. The material must be at least two yards long and three quarters of a yard wide. It should be

drawn well up in front and pinned to the cap or bonnet, then pulled down over the ears and crossed behind, bringing the ends to the front, where they can be fastened in a bow under the chin. Put in several pins to hold it in place. White worsted gloves, and goggles, of course.

"Alas! If some women are going to motor, they must relinquish the hope of keeping their soft, peachlike bloom."

Women, however, did not relinquish that hope, and they never liked goggles. Consequently many masks, with glass slits at the eyes, were experimented with. A French artist designed a series of lifelike motor masks, depicting the faces of Sarah Bernhardt, Rejane, and Yvette Guilbert, but they



"Wow! This microbe has the mumps!"

Rodolfo Willard

had an annoying tendency to crumple or blow sideways in the wind. Another artist made masks of beaten silver for the ladies.

For the menfolks, another leading apostle of elegance advised a suit of heavy cloth lined with punctured chamois, and with sleeves buttoning tightly around the wrists. Also gaiters with knickerbockers; and a coat of rough fur, with a collar large enough, when turned up, nearly to surround the head. Heavy silk underclothing, for warmth, and for protection against dust, which sifts through the outer clothing. Snow boots, gauntlets, and goggles, naturally. He also wrote:

"In summer, provided a thick suit of clothes be worn, a greatcoat is sometimes unnecessary, except as a protection from dust. A light silk handkerchief, tucked in over the collar, is necessary to keep the dust from working in."

For the natty dudes, however, I found advertised in 1906:

Danish kidskin coats, full-skirted; long coats of Manchurian dogskin with collar and cuffs of wombat fur. Also Eton-colored pongee silk dusters, caps, goggles, leggings, and "the converture rug—may be easily converted into a pair of trousers—in black and red rubber." (I don't quite understand that last one.)

By 1908 they were actually giving advice to women who *drove their own cars*, though that was still considered "fast."

"Indispensable to the woman driver is the overall. . . . Rings, when you are driving, hurt terribly; also, the stones are loosened. . . . A good-sized hand mirror is most handy, not only for personal use, but to hold up to see what is behind you. . . . It is advisable to carry a small revolver. . . . A hairpin is useful for cleaning the gasoline feed-line. . . . A speedometer, while not necessary, is an interesting accessory." When I told Grace this news nugget she said she also likes a clock, cigarette lighter, radio, and a few other things.

THE Horseless Carriage marches on! I hate to leave it. Let me go back just once more, and thumb through the news dispatches of 1896 to 1903.

"One lady wishes" (1896) "to purchase a motor to draw her bath chair, in place of her donkey. . . . Barnum & Bailey have come to town with a new attraction, a motor wagon, which casts the familiar lions, tigers, and acrobats into the shade. . . . The wits are amused by an Englishman who proposes to build a small house on wheels to attach to his horseless carriage" (1896). . . . "From Munich, Germany, comes a report of a marvelous new gas engine invented by an engineer named Rudolph Diesel" (1897). . . . "Experts" (1902) "say it will take 50 years to get the vibration of motors down to the point of comfort. Sir Henry Thompson, the noted British physician, says the motor does not exercise the legs; and advises the motorist to 'alight at the end of 20 miles and run smartly for 200 yards.' . . ."

"The Automobile Club of America is offering large prizes for a device to overcome the dust nuisance. . . . Mr. H. C. Frick, the Pittsburgh steel magnate" (1903), "has a powerful machine in which he is driven to his business. He says that it can go 14 miles in 21 minutes, and saves



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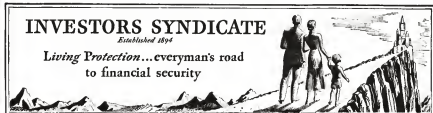
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him at least a half-million dollars a year. . . . A new business has appeared" (1902) "—insuring against accidents arising from the use of horseless carriages." (This little business is now running to a couple of hundred million a year.) "Much comment has been caused here and abroad by the decision" (1902) "of Columbia University to add to the curriculum a course in automobile mechanics. . . . It is reported" (1902) "that the amount invested in the automobile industry is more than 15 million dollars." (Dear, dear! They tell me that motor sales last year

amounted to \$3,319,497,973 wholesale.) . . . "Motorists" (1902) "have discovered a remarkable stretch of sand between Daytona and Ormond Beach, in Florida, which is said to be ideal for scorching. . . . Of the 39 cars that started in the great endurance test" (1903) "from Weehawken, N. J., to Pittsburgh, Pa., no less than 25 completed the distance within eight days. . . . A motor vehicle has crossed the continent!" (1903) "L. L. Whitman and E. T. Hammond made the distance from San Francisco to New York in 73 days, only 57 of which were spent on the road."

Ah, now we are getting somewhere. But—what's this in a great national periodical, in 1902? "In the field of automobile locomotion, the inventors have come to a practical standstill.

But somebody must have given a little thought to the horseless carriage. It seems that in the year 1936 one car went over 300 miles an hour; another crossed the continent in 53 hours; America has about 27,000,000 of them (70 per cent of all in the world); and Americans traveled a total of more than 400 billion miles in their "mocs" last year.

## Happy Birthday from Father

(Continued from page 58)

new life in the house. Always when his father came home everything seemed to spring into life and gaiety. But this time there were three of them . . . three enormous men.

Fresh servants were engaged, and Mrs. Howard was so busy that, as she said over and over again, "If it goes on like this for long, I'll drop in my grave." The only person who was quiet and undisturbed was Lucy. Maurice still went up to her room to play with her, but she was only a shadow to him. His whole heart was set toward his father.

It was as though with the arrival of his two uncles he saw so clearly how deep his adoration of his father was. For they were big and handsome men, too, and smelt splendidly of tobacco and shaving soap, were laughing and jolly and friendly. But they were not his father. They, themselves, seemed to feel that, for he was the only one they listened to, looked up to.

BUT here was an ironic thing: It was more than ever difficult for Maurice to be alone with his father; but he could be alone with his uncles whenever he pleased. They made a fuss over him. They took him to the circus. Uncle Blair often seized him to take him driving in the car.

So, with this attention from his uncles, Maurice's life blossomed. It was all gay and exciting now. But the one thing in the world that he wanted he couldn't have—his companionship with his father. It seemed to be forever on the verge of happening. His father would say, "Hello. Want to come for a drive? Be ready in half an hour." But then when the half-hour was over and Maurice was there all dressed and eager, something would have happened. There would be a telephone call or, worst of all, a lady would arrive.

Maurice's father seemed to be forever in

the company of beautiful ladies, and, oh! how Maurice hated them. Sometimes they did not notice him at all. Sometimes they would treat him as a baby, crying out in hard, cooing voices, "Oh, the darling! How old is he? . . . Not really!" Sometimes they really liked him and wanted him to go with them. But he always refused and was sulky, because they were his enemies and kept him from his father.

With the spring came Maurice's birthday. May the 2d. It so happened that never so long as he remembered had his father been home for his birthday. It had been quite a pleasant event without him, because the cook made a cake and people gave him presents. But always he had longed for his father to be there.

Once there had come all the way from a place called South Africa a telegram wishing him many happy returns and asking Mrs. Howard to give him five dollars. What an event that had been! It had, however, happened only once. In the other years there had been silence.

But now, miracle of miracles! On a sunny morning, there appeared in the schoolroom Uncle Blair and his father. (Never his father alone. Why couldn't he come to the schoolroom just once by himself?) Miss Brent and Maurice were doing geography and were trying to come to some decision as to what the purpose of the River Amazon really was. Then there was Uncle Blair's roaring voice: "Say, kid, I hear you're to be ninety-nine two weeks from Tuesday. We must celebrate."

And his father, looking so beautiful in a dark blue suit, so distinguished, so greatly superior in every way to Uncle Blair, coming over to him, said, "How old will you be in two weeks' time, Maurice?"

"Eleven, Father."

"Eleven? Can it be possible? Why, it seems only yesterday you were sucking your thumb." Then he turned away, looked for a moment at Miss Brent, as he always looked at every woman, to see whether by any chance she might, in a miraculous way, turn out to be attractive. He decided very quickly that that was the last thing that she was and went on: "We must have a birthday party. A grand birthday party. Would you like that?"

"Yes, Father, I would."

"What do you want for a birthday present?"

Maurice thought. Then his eyes became full of light. His hand trembled a little against the paper. "What I'd like better than anything else, Father, would be a

train. A real electric train with tracks that would run all around the schoolroom."

Maurice's father laid his hand on Maurice's head and said, "A train it shall be." . . .

From that moment an idea took possession of Maurice like a little demon.

What he saw was one of those wonderful railways running right around the room, with stations, signal boxes, and bridges. An electric train with little red and green cars, his father on his knees beside the railway, and Maurice close up against him. The two of them alone, no one else there, watching the train pursue its perilous journey. That would be heaven.

He formed in his mind the idea of what he would say: "Could we do it together, Father, do you think? Just the two of us? I would like that." And he would lead his father up to the room, see that there were no ladies there to disturb him—he might even lock the door.

So, during this two weeks, he thought of nothing else. He even dreamed of it. . . . He and his father, kneeling side by side; they two in perfect companionship.

THE birthday arrived, as everything arrives in this only too punctual world. It was a May day of absolute splendor.

Maurice, as soon as he was awake, dressed and came into the schoolroom. And there was Miss Brent, his breakfast, and a pile of delightful presents done up in paper.

Miss Brent gave him a book, *Don Quixote*. There was something from Mrs. Howard, the cook, John, the new butler, and from Lucy a little train with two cars and the engine. The cars were painted a deep red.

"How funny," he began. "Lucy—" and then he stopped. Because, after all, his father might not give him a train, as he promised. But there was something pathetic about this little affair. Somehow, in some curious way, it resembled Lucy. He put it on the carpet and wound it up. It fussed along toward the table, suddenly made an eccentric turn, and tumbled over on its side, where, Maurice couldn't help feeling, it looked more like Lucy than ever.

"I must go and thank her," he said. He went round the house thanking everybody, and when he came to Lucy, who was just going off to school, all he could say was, "Thank you so much, Lucy. That's awfully kind of you."

Lucy stared at him as usual, speechless. She had her hat on, an ugly one. "Mother



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said that she heard you wanted a train."

"Yes, I did."

"I went out and bought it myself with my own money."

He felt that she wanted him to say something, just as he wanted to be alone with his father, but he couldn't say anything. He only grinned and ran off, Lucy staring after him. Then, when he came into the schoolroom again, Miss Brent informed him that there was to be a surprise.

"We're to go out and take a walk and not come back until twelve," she said.

MAURICE said not another word, and together they went off into the green park. Here they sat on a bench. Maurice stared in front of him, while Miss Brent looked about her with the air of one who expects a romance at any moment but is determined to reject it when it comes. Maurice was thinking of nothing but the wonderful event that was shortly to occur. It would need a little courage, but he was determined on what to do. When he came into the schoolroom, saw the train there and his uncles and his father, he would, after thanking them, say to his father, "Would you mind if we were alone for a moment? I have something I want to say to you."

And his father would answer, "Of course!" Then he would turn to Maurice's uncles and say, "Leave me alone with the kid, will you?" And his uncles would leave the room.

On returning from the walk he ran up the stairs ahead of Miss Brent and then paused outside the schoolroom. Within, there was apparently much jollity. He opened the door and went in.

An amazing sight met his eyes. The schoolroom table had been removed. Around the floor from end to end, in a great glittering circle, ran a railroad track. On the track was the most glorious train, something quite beyond anything he'd ever imagined. It had about everything that a train ought to have. A superb engine—indeed, two—one at each end. The cars were brilliantly colored, the trucks laden with coal. Along the line there were bridges, signal stations, railway platforms, and even, at one end, a marvelous tunnel.

Kneeling on the floor beside the railway were his two uncles, their broad backs presented to his full gaze. At the other end of the room, looking down upon the scene, was his father, quietly smoking his pipe. He heard one uncle say, "Not that way. Look here! I'll show you!" And one huge uncle shoved the other huge uncle.

His father said, "I don't think either of you knows anything about it. Let me try!"

Maurice moved timidly forward. The three men all looked at him. The two uncles shouted together, "Why, here's the kid! What do you think of it?"

And his father, suddenly going down on his knees beside his uncles, looked at him and said, "Here's your birthday present, Maurice. I hope you'll like it."

"Oh, it's wonderful," Maurice sighed. He advanced a little nearer. But now three broad backs seemed to present an insuperable obstacle.

"Now I've got it!" Uncle Blair cried. "Couldn't understand it at first. Now she's off!" And, indeed, the engine gave an extraordinary, engine-like scream, moved a little forward, then stopped again.

"There you are!" the other uncle cried.

"That wasn't the way!"

Maurice thought of the little speech that had been in his mind: "Please, Father, let us do it together alone. Can't we?" But he couldn't say it. Those broad backs defeated him. He did, however, manage to bring out very quietly, "May I look at the engine?" Nobody heard him.

Uncle Blair, who was now lying flat on his stomach, so that he seemed to spread across the entire floor, muttered, "It's that little wire. It's got loose."

"No, it hasn't!" said the other uncle. "It's nothing to do with the wire. Something is stuck in the funnel."

"Might I see the engine?" Maurice said again, this time rather more loudly. Uncle Blair heard him and shouted, "Why, of course, kid. It's your birthday present, you know." However, no one moved.

Maurice stood beside them, hesitating. It didn't seem as yet like his railway at all. But perhaps it soon would.

"Now it's off!" Uncle Blair shouted, suddenly heaving himself up. "There she goes!" And the train did move with a wonderful miracle of ease and naturalness. "All aboard!" both uncles cried together. Maurice caught his father's sleeve.

"Thank you very much, Father," he said. His father, also on his knees, turned round towards him. They were now almost of a height, so that their faces were close together. Maurice saw his father's face as he had never seen it before. It was kind, indulgent, wise, but somehow distant. The eyes into whose depths Maurice could so profoundly look, were distant. They seemed scarcely to be aware of Maurice at all.

Maurice had a frantic temptation. His heart hammered. The temptation was that he should bend forward and kiss his father's cheek. He had never kissed his father, only been kissed by him. And he'd long ago been told that manly little boys didn't kiss anybody. But this was a special occasion—his birthday. The moment was there; it was gone. And, instead of kissing him, he said, "Can I look, Father? May I?"

THE train was rushing along the line like a superb master of its craft. When it passed the signal station a little red sign jerked forward and then back again. When it passed the station platform a small automaton stationmaster jumped out of his box and then back again, and it disappeared into the tunnel. Maurice squeezed in between his father and Uncle Blair.

"I say, that's good!" he heard his father murmur. "Best I've ever seen."

"It ought to be," Uncle Blair roared. "It cost a pretty penny. Now it's round the bend!" Uncle Blair shouted, beside himself with excitement. "Didn't it take that bend grandly?" And he heaved against Maurice, who had to step back. Now the railroad track was entirely obscured from him.

But his father may have been conscious of something, for he turned, and with that kind, beneficent look in his eyes which had won for him the confidences of so many beautiful ladies, he said, "Do you like it, Maurice? Do you really? I hope you do."

Then was the moment for Maurice's sentence. He caught his father's arm. "Could we do it together, Father, just you and I—nobody else?" he murmured. But the small, hesitating tones were lost entirely in the shouts of both uncles. For the train began to spurt and snort and make

extraordinary chuckles. It reared itself on its hinder end and then stayed there at a full stop—half of itself in the air.

"My gosh!" one of the uncles shouted. "What's gone wrong now?"

"Don't touch it! I'm the only one here who understands the thing."

"No, you're not!" shouted the other uncle. "It was I who started it just now." They moved, both of them, off together toward the engine, and once more Maurice said, "Don't you think, Father, that you and I—?" But he never finished his sentence. For, in moving, his sleeve had caught the track, jerked a piece crooked, and the train, suddenly coming to life again, was dashing forward.

"Look out!" Uncle Blair cried in an ecstasy of panic. "What are you doing, Maurice? Leave the thing alone. Here, get back! Get back! Don't touch it!" And, with his uncle's vast body rushing toward him, he hurried himself out of the way.

NOW he was entirely isolated. The three men were so completely occupied that they had forgotten him. He waited, his small hands clenched. They'd all forgotten him. Then he heard Miss Brent in the doorway:

"Come, Maurice. You can play with your beautiful train later."

He suffered himself to be led away. Luncheon was an especially fine day, with roast chicken and ice cream because it was his birthday. But after lunch, when he thought that he might go and examine the railroad quietly, Miss Brent said to him, "Your father thinks it's better, darling, that you shouldn't play with the train until tomorrow. He's got a party tonight and he thought some of the ladies would like to look at it. So, as they got it running at last just before lunch, he doesn't want it disturbed again."

"Oh, I see," said Maurice.

"Would you like to go to the Zoo this afternoon?" Miss Brent asked.

"Yes, if you like," Maurice said. At ordinary times, he adored the Zoo. But he didn't enjoy it at all that afternoon.

He had his supper and was put to bed, fell asleep, and then awoke abruptly to the fact that there was a great deal of noise going on in the schoolroom. Loud voices, screams of laughter, and once and again he fancied he heard his father's enchanting tones. He told himself that he must not listen, and he hid his head under the bed-clothes.

Then he could endure it no longer. He jumped out of bed, hesitated for a moment, standing there in his pajamas; then timidly he opened the schoolroom door.

What a sight met him there! There was the railroad track and there was the train buzzing around, and there were ladies and gentlemen, all in the most brilliant evening clothes, his two uncles, each of them with an arm around a lady, some ladies and some gentlemen on their knees, and a perfect babble of cries:

"Oh, look! Isn't it marvelous?"

"Don't touch it, darling."

"There—it's stopped!"

"Give it a push!"

"Look out! You'll upset it!"

And then his father suddenly dropped onto his knees and cried out, "It's done that twice! We had a terrible time this morning with it."

Then his father looked up. He saw his

son, very small in his striped pajamas, staring at him. He jumped to his feet. "Why, it's Maurice! What the devil—!"

Everyone turned and looked. But Maurice saw only his father.

"Please, Father," said Maurice.

"Here, what are you doing? You ought to be in bed. I'll go and put you there."

Maurice's heart beat wildly. Was it, after all, to happen? But a beautiful lady, on her knees beside the engine, looked up and cried to Maurice's father, "Look here, silly; I found out what's the matter."

"Oh, have you?" said Maurice's father, his eyes suddenly becoming tender and translucent. He moved across to her.

MAURICE closed the door and went back to his room. His eyes were filled with tears, so that he saw but indistinctly. Nevertheless, very clear to him was Lucy's little train, lying on its side on the floor. He knelt down and picked it up and turned the little wheel on its side. With a ridiculous clicking noise, like an old lady whose false teeth were not securely fastened, it started across the carpet. Maurice looked at it.

Poor, sad, neglected little boy. . . . That might be the end, as it has been of so many stories. A remarkable thing, however, occurred. Maurice discovered that although his eyes were filled with tears, his heart was unexpectedly filled with rage. Why, it was his train, his birthday! His train—nobody else's! His train! And he hadn't been allowed even to touch it the whole day long!

He stood up. Suddenly he moved back to the schoolroom again. In another moment—and it was as though he were not truly himself—he was standing there. Now they were almost all on their knees, crowding the railway line, even pushing one another to get nearer to it. He cried out in a voice shaking with terror:

"It's my train! It's my train! I haven't been near it all day!"

Everyone looked up. There was a kind of spiritual gasp. Some lady said, "Doesn't he look sweet?"

But his father had sprung to his feet and was staring at him as though he'd never seen him before. "Why, Maurice—"

Maurice's fists were clenched, his eyes glared at his father. "It's my train! You said it was! Why shouldn't I play with it?"

His father looked at him, went across to him, picked him up, and rested him on his shoulder. "By George! He's right! It's right what he says. Look here—get out, all of you! Go downstairs and make merry. I'll be with you later. Meanwhile, Maurice and I are going to have this to ourselves. Go on—clear out! Clear out!"

With laughter and cries and a general kind of orgy of merriment, out of the room they all went. Maurice was put down on the floor.

"And now," said his father, his arm around his son, holding him close to him, "let's make this thing work properly. It's been sticking all day. What it really needed was you to attend to it!"

*How that the children are  
all worried. we'd be glad  
six weeks touching at  
twenty ports. I shall write  
you again from Paris.  
Saw  
many*



### "We'll be able to take it easy"

"THE way I look at it is this. I work pretty hard, myself, and certainly no one ever had a better wife than Mary. She's taken some pretty hard knocks . . . and always with a smile.

"I want the day to come when we can let up and cash in a little . . . possibly go abroad . . . rest and have a good time, never have to worry about money.

"So I'm starting now. I went in and asked the Chief for the name of a good insurance company, and he recommended the New England Mutual. Said he'd been doing business with them for years—that they were chartered a hundred years ago, and safe as a church, but thoroughly modern and progressive all along the line.

"I called them up and we figured out a policy that fits me like a glove. It will make me independent at sixty . . . and, of course, it gives Mary full protection in the meantime.

"Somehow, I feel like a different man today! I know we have something to look forward to . . . rest . . . happiness . . . security and peace of mind. We'll be able to take it easy."

Write to Dept. A-3 for interesting new booklet:  
"Building Financial Independence with Certainty"



## NEW ENGLAND MUTUAL

### LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY OF BOSTON

★ ★ ★ GEORGE WILLARD SMITH, PRESIDENT ★ ★ ★



Hugh Walpole will return in an early issue with another human story sliced from real life.

# DIVINE fire

(Continued from page 55)

haunting lament. She was remorseful, to a meager degree, that she had not made this break for liberty earlier in the day when Ted was flushed with success. On the other hand, to wait still longer might be better—until after the danger of the freeze. But right now poor Ted was down again. He had contracted to sell the crop, but until the pickers came the deed to the fruit was his. Every cent of his inheritance was on those trees, and every orange could be blighted, every cent lost. And in this crisis there was a note on a pillow in the heart of his home, an empty bed, a hollow place where something had been torn up by the roots out of his life.

Something he had said that afternoon echoed: "You've stuck by me like a sport." A blush stung her cold face. Like a sport!

SHE was suddenly chilled. Could she get back before Ted found that note? It was more than possible. Whatever his distraction, he would not go to her room. He would tiptoe about the house, doing his work quietly, doggedly—and all alone. The note, thank heaven, would be on her pillow when she got back.

Descending the switchbacks, she sped out on the more level boulevard. As the car cut down through the foothills, Vera saw the great swoop of the citrus country, with all ranch windows lighted. This world down here had awakened to life. Many cars were racing. The growers were summoning their Mexicans. On the boulevard that skirted the southern rim of the Denning grove, she stopped the car. It was not until then that she noticed that the windbreak—a row of enormous trees thrust upward into the sky—was stark and still.

The thing that all the valley dreaded had happened: The wind had dropped.

One grove to the north was already bright with fires. Vera wondered why Ted had not lighted first. He was in the grove now, doubtless, and she must be careful how she got into the house and into her bedroom to tear up that hideous note.

She left her car at the lower windbreak and struck out through the grove. It was hard on her slippers wading through that cover crop. She barked her shins on what seemed to be an iron box or else a huge roasting pan. Its lid, smeared thick with oil, was level with the foot-high growth of alfalfa, so that even in daylight one might stumble over it. Vera knew this was a

smudge pot and that there was one opposite every tree directly in her path. The siving of a grove depended on them. Ted had told her how their smoke and heat, when the oil was lit, brought the temperature up four or five degrees to cover the margin between destruction and life.

She stumbled over another, then another. There was no avoiding the foul, sticky things. If they had been lighted, like the pots of that other grove to the north, she could have seen her way. This made her wonder again why Ted was so slow. He must have gone to the subdivision for his Mexicans and been delayed. He would have taken the old car, which he kept in a barn, hence there was no reason to fear that he had discovered Vera's car was gone. There was still hope.

She reached clear ground and had more light, for many cars were racing. One car was stopping at every ranch. The driver—a sort of Paul Revere—was shouting as he slammed brakes and dashed to front doors: "Light up! Light up! A pot to every tree! It'll drop to twenty before morning, with this wind gone."

A neighbor rancher was chugging up towards his grove with two Mexicans. As a turning in the road shot his headlight full on Vera, he yelled at her, "Hi, Mrs. Denning! Why isn't Ted lighting up? I saw him go for his Mexes an hour ago."

"He's getting his oil," she answered, believing this was the truth. It took only twenty minutes or so to get the Mexicans from the subdivision, hence he must have returned.

"He better get started firing," Pikey called, "or he'll be wiped out!" His words drifted off with the rattling car.

Vera slid like a shadow into the house, feeling the impact of silence and a great emptiness. Her heart jerked when she saw the door to her own bedroom opened.

She dashed in, wondering why Ted had happened to go in there. He had awakened, no doubt, when the thermometer in the grove rang in its alarm at twenty-eight; but in the crisis the last thing he would do would be to disturb Vera, or even think of her. Yet through some little trick of luck he had opened the door and found his wife gone. Then she saw what the trick was.

At the threshold of the door she found a warm feather quilt—old Grandma Denning's masterpiece—which lay in a heap as if dropped there. There was the explanation. The house was chilly. Ted had brought the quilt from their own double bed to cover her and keep her warm.

Her mind raced now. She could not believe that Ted had left his grove in this freeze. And yet here it was "an hour since he left for his Mexicans." It was all clear now. He had gone, not for his Mexicans, but for his lost wife. After reading that note he had easily guessed the truth—that she had gone to the mountain party which Kildare, the director, was giving. When Ted got there he would find he was wrong. But that was not the important thing in Vera's heart. The absence of Ted at the fateful hour when his grove was to be destroyed revealed something else. He loved her more than his oranges, more than his life career.

Vera picked up a flashlight and ran out to the road. She ran all the way past her own acres up to the Pikey ranch. Men were hurrying through the rows with their torches. One of the men—the rancher him-

self—had reached the lower end of his acres as she got there.

"I've got to have help!" Vera cried. "Ted isn't back. There's nobody in our grove to light up."

"Listen, Mrs. Denning. I only got Jim and a couple of Mexes to help. Ted'll be back; don't worry. Think he's going to throw away his grove? Not him!"

"You've got to help me!" Vera begged, following him as he ran to the next pot. "I can't do it myself. I don't know how."

"Well, who can I give you? My old woman's making coffee, and you wouldn't expect her to light your smudge pots!"

No, Vera did not ask that. Mrs. Pikey was one of the old-timers, like Grandmother Denning, but no one would ever dream of her lighting up a grove.

"Can't you ring up somebody?" Pikey called. "There's some fruit tramps in town. You can get 'em with your car. Only, that'll be too late."

"How do you light the torch? I'll light up, myself!"

"Are you crazy? You firing up forty acres!" But Pikey stopped his work, staring. Then he snapped, "I'll send a Mex to get you started. Light every other pot first. Leave the Valencias out. They won't freeze like the others. Fire up the seedlings and sweets. By the time you're started Mrs. Pikey will drive to town and get help."

Vera turned and ran. A moment later a Mexican followed. They raced side by side to the sheds in back of the Denning house, Vera and her fat-faced, saddle-colored helper. She showed him where the torches and distillate were kept. And he showed her how to pour the kerosene and gasoline mixture into the can at the end of the torch, and how to tilt it so that the drips caught fire and fell into the open pots of oil, igniting them. Then he left her standing there alone, holding the flaming torch.

SHE started down the nearest row, slid the lid from a pot. It was rusty, and she had to tussle. The flaming drops glittered on her grease-smeared frock. Smoke belched up, spreading like the oil it consumed, tenting the trees, turning the golden nuggets of fruit to the color of slag in a sluice box.

She ran on, wading through the cover crop, skipping a tree, and firing the next pot. She stumbled on down the row, heading for the windbreak, the horizon of her world.

She fell from running to trudging, dragging her feet through the alfalfa. Even the few pots she had fired kindled a lurid light, throwing the oranges against a background like tons of black sheep's wool. Never had she seen so many. What a hoard of nuggets to save so easily!

But her slippers were torn with that first long hike, clods bruised her feet, and there were many more rows yet to be fired. Nevertheless, saving those oranges was like saving so many lives. Her feet throbbed. Branches reached for her scarf, her face. She was thrilled with a strange ecstasy, the thrill of saving life. She rushed on, buoyed beyond her strength. She was saving not only the crop but the ranch—her ranch and Ted's.

She sank to her knees as the second trip brought her back to the house. She would have to take that trip a hundred times, and then start all over again lighting the

alternate pots she had left out. It might have been the second trip—she was never sure—when she saw three Mexicans padding toward her.

Mrs. Pikey, one of them reported, had driven down to the subdivision for them. They lit their torches and spread out, each running down a row which Vera pointed out to them.

"Leave the Valencias till the last," she said, assuming her new role. She commanded the ranch, she was obeyed. Here was a part to play! But she was not a landed proprietress of old Spanish days, they observed, for although dressed like one, she toiled along with her mozos. It put fire into their simple souls. It must be a matter of great import if a woman like this, dressed for a fiesta, carried a torch with them. They followed her, racing low-crouched, each man between two rows, leaving fire in his wake.

VERA did not leave them until the whole grove was an inferno of trees writhing in a quickening curtain of light.

She sank to the steps of the ranch house, bedraggled and torn, a limp scarecrow that might have been tossed there by the north with the tumbleweed. Mrs. Pikey was holding a cup of coffee to her lips. The big-boned ranch wife found her shuddering with cold, and ran into the house to get her something to wear besides the tattered dance frock. She picked up the old gown that had once belonged to that frontier heroine, Grandmother Denning. It covered the young girl from her bare, scratched shoulders to her silken-clad legs.

"Here's just the thing for you, Vera," the old ranch wife said. "You ought to of been wearing it at first—not that hurrah rig you got on. Here's a real dress—and it fits!"

Vera did not hear a word she said. She was too dazed. She felt as if she had been beaten on the back and legs into insensibility. She wondered if she could drag herself to her bed. She was vaguely aware then that the Mexicans were standing in front of her waiting for her commands and that Mrs. Pikey had gone back to her own menfolk.

One of the Mexicans was asking if she wanted all the vents open. It was very cold, he was saying. They must burn much oil. The "vents," she guessed vaguely, were those little holes in the pots which increased the draft. She nodded, her head lolling. Another argued fervently that many of the pots were out. They would not stay lighted till the oil was hot. More would snuff out. They must light again—pronto. The third Mexican was refilling his torch can.

Vera dragged herself to her feet. She ordered all torches lit, and once again they started down the endless lines. They kept all pots burning, all vents open. Vera did not know how she went over it again, except for that strange rapture which restored her strength. She was too tired to feel pain now. She plodded over the clods, for the first time in her life thrilling to the smell of earth. It was the thrill Ted must have felt when he cultivated that same grove and fed it water and plowed and fertilized it. That smell of earth she knew could transmute itself in the proper time into the fragrance of orange blossoms. On this spot which was now an inferno of fire and smoke a garden would bloom, a gar-



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*"A recent bereavement brought home to me how important it is that everyone know about the unfamiliar details of making funeral arrangements... I had read your advertisements and your booklet, 'What To Do'... The knowledge thus acquired was invaluable. Keep on spreading the information... Tell everybody, please..."*

**I**F YOU FEEL as many people do, you do not like to think or talk about funerals and caskets. But there are at least two things which really should be taken care of before the need arises—and now is the very best time to do it.

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den where Vera and Ted would work together.

All night she clodhopped, her heart burning. This was Vera's dance. It was her role. . . .

AS Ted Denning drove down the switchbacks he saw the earth blanketed with a flat, dreary cloud. The pure air whipped past, turning smoky as he sped downward. His tongue was dry and hot. His gray, hard face was icy. He must find his wife. Since she was not at the mountain party he must ring up all her Hollywood friends. He recalled that there was a list of their numbers on a telephone pad at home.

Riding out on the valley bottoms towards his ranch, he reached the upper groves where the smoke hung thick. Soot dirtied the fruit, darkened the windbreak where the bark had peeled from white trunks. He rode into a grimy world. Distillate had killed the wan, sweet scent of the orchards. Dawn was coming somewhere far above that black curtain in the air where the sun broke through like a boil.

He tried to take a deep breath. The air about his ranch would be pure, for he remembered dully that he had not smudged that night. His oranges would be gleaming bright and clean in the smutty dawn. They would be beautiful—and blighted. The crop was lost. Many of the trees, doubtless, were destroyed. But this did not seem to matter much.

As he swerved into the long, palm-fringed lane that skirted his ranch he was aware gradually and without interest that the cloud hung thick over his grove. It must have sifted down from the Pikey

ranch, he thought. He chugged on up the lane, and then gripped his wheel with a start. He saw a pot burning. Old Pikey must have found a moment or two to come over during the night. But he could not have come till he lighted his own grove. And that would have been too late.

Then he saw another pot, smoking thick and low and black, like a lamp that is out of oil. That meant that the pots had been burning for hours—six hours at least! Through the haze he caught one vista after another between the long rows as he drove up to his house. Every pot had been lighted. Then he saw two squat figures out in the open space between the garage and house. Their sombreros made them look like black mushrooms. Some miracle had happened. Old Man Pikey must have sent for the Mexicans, but Ted could not quite believe it. Pikey had seen him—Ted—apparently going after the Mexicans himself at the beginning of the freeze. Why would he be bothered about Ted's grove when he had his own to save?

A frail figure in an old gown was limping across the clods in the distance. It was a Mexican woman, doubtless—an over-worked *mujer* who had come with her men. In the desperate need for time they must have enlisted one of their browbeaten women to help them.

"Why don't you give this *mujer* of yours some of your coffee, you hombres?" Ted growled. "It's like you Mexes to make a beaver of burden out of your wives. Who ever heard of a woman smudging!"

They took off their sombreros, rolling them humbly as Ted swore at them. Then Ted saw that the woman was his wife.

He was reminded somehow of that oval portrait of his grandmother, who had always been pointed out to him for her heroism in crossing the plains. He gasped Vera's name and ran to meet her, and she stumbled forward.

He took her in his arms and carried her into the house, to the bedroom—the middle room where she would not be choked by the oozing smoke.

AS SHE sank deep into the warm feather bed, she reached wearily for the note that had been crumpled and thrown back on the pillow from which it had been snatched many hours ago. With her eyes clinging to Ted's for a long, glittering moment, her fingers tore the note in pieces.

"When I wake up, I'll talk to you about it," she pleaded, exhausted.

"No, no." He shook his head definitely. "No, No talk." His hand brushed the point aside exactly as it had done that afternoon when she told him she had not been the right kind of wife. The gesture was such a precise repetition that Vera wondered: Had Ted known all along?

It was quite probable. He had said she was the kind of girl who wanted to do things, who wanted a career.

She answered those former random statements now: "I've found what I want, Ted—my life. It's your life." Her eyelids drooped. "We've got to talk about it tomorrow, dear—how I can help you work our grove."

He drew the quilt over her. As she dropped to sleep the feel of smoke in her throat was softened by the breath of bruised rosemary and orris and lavender.

## Night-desk DADDIES

(Continued from page 23)

hear you say that.—Would you like to say just a word to my father? You can't know how much it would mean to him."

"But I thought you said—"

"I didn't know who you were when you came. I didn't want him disturbed. But if you really do want to see him—"

"Of course I do."

She went to the rear door of the room, looked in, and said, "He's awake, Mr. Arlin. I thought he was." She spoke in Italian to the sick man; then—"He can hardly believe it, Mr. Arlin. He thanks you for being so kind. Will you come?" She whispered, "He is very weak."

When Arlin saw Pasquale, he knew. He knew that the wicker basket was laid down for good. Something clutched at this newspaperman's heart. He began in a voice of forced optimism: "Just came in to see how you were, Pasquale. All the boys send their best wishes."

Pasquale neither nodded nor shook his head. He lay quite still, but his eyes followed the motion of the visitor's lips and sought the meaning from Arlin's eyes. Arlin had put out his hand on approaching the bed. Pasquale put one big hand under this offered palm and, with the other, patted it gently. But he did not speak.

The interview was ended. Arlin leaned over and touched Pasquale's shoulder. "Hurry up and get well, Pasquale! We're waiting for you to come back to us. The chief wants his big red *appul*, you know." Pasquale's eyes glistened with tears.

PASQUALE'S daughter closed the door softly. In a steady tone, she said, "You know. I see you know. I know, too. It cannot be long. I have made up my mind to it. His heart has given out. Don't think because my father didn't say anything that he didn't appreciate your coming. You've made him happy. Will you please thank all those other kind men for my father—and for me?"

Arlin could not bear to admit to himself that he had come really only in obedience to an idle whim. He picked up his hat from the table. Then, at the threshold, he paused. "Pardon me, Miss Amato. I don't want to be intrusive—but there is just you and your father?"

"Yes, sir. My mother is dead. But if you are thinking—I mean—I have been through high school and two years of busi-

ness college. It is only loneliness I have to fear. I have been offered many jobs. You see, I speak Italian and also—"

"English without any accent. I wondered about that."

"Well, you see, I am an American. I was born here.— Yes, I could have been working, but my father didn't want me to."

"I see. Well, let me give you my—our—best wishes. We'd like to hear that your father is better—getting well. Good night, Miss—Miss—" The name eluded him. "Amato," she supplied, with a smile. "And my name is Carlotta."

Arlin went back to the *Dispatch* office and told the men on the night desk. They agreed that it was tough luck. Matt Sammons growled, "Ain't that life! With all the kidnappers and gunmen and bums in the world, a decent, hard-working fruita man gets knocked off."

A whistle from the speaking tube. Willis Farman answered: "Hello, Harry! . . . Oh, all right, Harry. Oh, by the way, Harry, Arlin went down to see Pasquale. . . . No, I said Pasquale. You know, Pasquale, the fruita man. He's getting ready to kick out. . . . Yeah, tough. . . . All right, I will.—Harry says to cut that League of Nations stuff to the bone, Matt! We got ninety-two columns of advertising tomorrow."

Five nights later, a professional-looking little man, with magnificent mustaches and European politeness, appeared at the door



of the room. "Mr. Stanley—could I speak with him? My card—if you please; thank you."

The card signified that the visitor was an Italian attorney-at-law, 121 Cotter Street. Harry Stanley turned impatiently. "I'm Mr. Stanley. What is it?"

"I observe you are very busy, Mr. Stanley. I shall not be long. My friend and client, Pasquale Amato, died yesterday. Before he died he asked me to write down the words you will find in this envelope and deliver them to you. Thank you."

"Wait a minute. Stay while I read it!" The desk chief slit the sealed envelope, spread out the single page, and read:

Respected sir, and your associates:

I, Pasquale Amato, wish to say good-by to you all. You have been very kind to me and my heart is full to you. I am not afraid to die, because I have tried to be a good man to everyone. It is only because I am leaving my little Carlotta alone that I am in fear. It is not money, not that, either. I have been a saving man. It is only that she is so young and so beautiful, and her mother is dead before me, and it is not so nice world, except some people. It is because you gentlemen are so full of wisdom, knowing so greatly about life, that if my little Carlotta should be in doubt and need wisdom she should be able to ask advice of you, please. I am your friend, who respects you gentlemen so much,

PASQUALE AMATO

HARRY STANLEY read the strange document twice through. Then he said to the lawyer, "I understand. Tell Carlotta to come and see me, any time."

The lawyer bowed himself out.

"Listen to this, fellows," said Stanley to the group around him. He read the message slowly. "It looks like we were appointed guardians or something."

"A fine lot of guardians you bozos would make," snorted Matt Sammons. "Pasquale must have been insane."

"You saw her, Horace. What's she like?"

"She's beautiful in that lovely Italian Madonna way, but something else. Very intelligent and well educated. Said she'd been to business college."

Stanley ran his fingers through his shock of prematurely snowy hair and stared at the paper in front of him. When he spoke, he said, "Well, let's get to work."

But on the following evening the chief said to Horace Arlin, "Horace, take a run down to see Carlotta and ask her if she wants a job on the *Dispatch*. I was talking to the boss today and told him we need an assistant in the library. Pee-Wee Boardman is getting senile."

Arlin jumped up. "Harry, you're an ace!"

"Ace nothing. It's an honest-to-goodness job. We had to have someone in the library that can keep awake—might as well be her if she can make the grade."

THE daughter of Pasquale was not a disappointment. Even Pee-Wee Boardman, who had been librarian since 1889 and resented everything that disturbed his slumber, and particularly resented being asked where anything was, succumbed to Carlotta's ability, her friendliness and charm. She at once started the giant task of straightening out, from A to Z, the envelopes in the "morgue," where Pee-Wee had secreted Senator Borah in the envelope of Haile Selassie, and Madame Perkins in

# Viceroy

## THE NEW CIGARETTE



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- ★ An extra fine Turkish-Domestic blend

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**MOTORISTS WISE**  
**SIMONIZ**  
**HOUSEWIVES DO LIKEWISE**

the envelope of Cardinal O'Connell. Within a month the news editors were able to call for *Burke's Peerage*, and get it. They could also consult *Whitaker's Almanac* without first retrieving it from beneath the Chicago telephone directory.

It was a thrilling new world to Pasquale's daughter. Dealing with words, with books, with ideas, with swift-moving events. She realized how it had appealed to her simple, good father. He had often told her marvelous tales about the supermen, the queer, great, sardonic, generous group that sat around the big table in his favorite newspaper office. They called Mr. Stanley by his first name, and even spoke flippantly to him, and yet how a word from the master set them in loyal motion. How they occasionally hurled epithets at one another; yet how ungrudgingly they took on extra work when a comrade was worn out or absent. These were the men, breezy, abrupt, sometimes puzzling to Carlotta—but always, at bottom, truly courteous and friendly.

Yet Pasquale's daughter was a little frightened of it all. Not at the work. She was efficient, sure, quick, and she knew it. Not that; but a strange feeling that it was not real; that it could not be true that the daughter of Pasquale, the fruit peddler, could be suddenly transplanted to this scene. All Carlotta knew was that Arlin had come happily, even joyously, to her and told her that there was a job for her at the *Dispatch*, in the library. But why Pasquale's daughter? And why the curious paternal attitude of the desk editors, who occasionally entered the library to consult a book or envelope. Why did the dour, grizzled Matt Sammons once stop and pat her on the shoulder and say, "How is our little girl tonight?"

Feeling closest, then, to Horace Arlin, Carlotta sought information from him: "Mr. Arlin, I'm very happy here. But I can't help wondering . . . the desk men . . . even you . . . treat me differently. They're so solicitous about me. . . . Of course, I love it, I appreciate it . . . but it makes me feel queer. Tell me frankly, how did it happen?"

"Why quarrel with your luck? If it is luck to associate with my fellows. I don't say it is. There was a job open and—well, I told the chief you had a good education . . . oh, why bother about it? You're here. And everybody's glad of it."

Carlotta laughed, but looked puzzled. As for Horace Arlin, of course she felt she knew him best. It was he who had come to Clark Street that night. . . .

ARLIN came oftenest to the library. "Try your hand at writing something, Carlotta," he once suggested. "There's a world of good stuff down in Little Italy. And you know both sides. That's what would give you an edge. Anyway, try a little story on how the East End people take care of their problems during the hard times. Do they help each other out? Try it, Carlotta."

Pasquale's daughter tried it. The result was stilted, affected. Arlin went over it with Carlotta and showed her how it should be done. "None of these long sentences. No fluff. No attempt to be effective. Let the story tell itself." . . .

One night Arlin laid three takes in front of the chief. "Carlotta has something here that seems pretty good. Want to look?"

"Is she writing? Gosh! They all itch, don't they? All right, I'll look at it." Stanley's eyes swept like a whisk broom. "Not bad. She can write! But not for us. It's not news, Arlin. It's Sunday stuff. Maybe Kennedy can use it."

Kennedy used it. Some of the reporters mentioned it kindly: "Nice little story of yours in the Sunday, Carlotta. Why don't you do some more?" They were not effusive; quite matter-of-fact.

She wrote a night-before-Christmas-in-Clark-Street story, at Arlin's urging. Harry Stanley used that one. "Anything about Christmas is news," he said. "Put a snappy head on it, Horace. Pasquale's daughter is coming along. But, heck! I don't want to see her wasting her life on a newspaper. Do you, Matt?"

"No," replied the sour one shortly.

"She ought to get married."

"Give her time," advised Arlin.

"Tell her not to marry a newspaperman," advised Willis Farman, depositing seven pages of Senator Driftwood's best speech in his basket.

"Pasquale's daughter can't marry anyone without my consent," put in Jerry. "I've got an obligation to Pasquale."

Thus did the slaves of the lamp try to dissemble the fact that they liked the idea that Pasquale's daughter was theirs, and that a glimmer of romance had reflected against the steeliest surface in the newspaper world—the news desk. . . .

ONE afternoon Harry Stanley took Horace Arlin aside. "Horace, you know Carlotta better than the rest of us. I've got something I want to tell you. I was talking with her last night and I made some terrible break. I don't know just what it was. The tears suddenly came into her eyes, and she put her head down on the desk and shook without making any sound. It was ghastly, Horace. I can't imagine what I could have said—unless—"

"Unless what?"

"Why, Carlotta had asked me just how it happened that we sent for her and gave her that job in the library. She caught me off guard, and in a burst of soft-headedness I told her about her father's letter. I guess I shouldn't have told her. But I thought it would please her. I don't see—"

"I see," said Arlin quickly.

"What do you see?"

"I'll tell you later, Harry. What did she say?"

"Well, that's what I was coming to. She said she would have to resign—throw up the job. She said she couldn't stay here now. Horace, the girl is hysterical. Maybe she doesn't feel well, eh? What did you mean by saying you see?"

"Boss, I know Carlotta. I've studied Carlotta. Carlotta is my specialty. I know how Pasquale's daughter's mind would work. Boss, did you ever look deep into Carlotta's eyes? Ever see anything there, same as was in Pasquale's?"

"What do you mean?"

"Harry, it's pride. It's the dignity of—well, maybe the old Romans had it. Not vanity; real pride. People like Pasquale and his daughter make their own way. They want to be givers, not takers. Carlotta suspected she had been forced on us. Now she's sure of it. . . . Boss, leave it to me. I've got an idea."

"I hope it's a good one, Horace. I wouldn't hurt that kid's feelings for the

world. I shouldn't have told her about Pasquale's letter. But she can't quit! We need her. Tell her I said that, will you?"

"I will, boss. I'll tell her a lot of things."

Arlin went into the library and said, "Carlotta, I wanted to talk with you—"

"And I want to talk with you, Horace. But this is not the place."

He hesitated. "No, you are right. Could we have a bite to eat together—you go out at seven?"

They went to Martell's, a short distance from the Row. Carlotta looked glowingly into Arlin's eyes and began, "I wanted to talk with you. You, of all people, you understand. I can be frank."

"Promise me, first, Carlotta—you won't leave the paper. . . . Yes, I know about it. Harry Stanley told me."

"I can't promise you that. I've resigned. Horace, you understand. My father never meant that Mr. Stanley and the rest of you should do anything for me—I mean, in a material way. Oh, how could you know so little about my poor father, who fought his own way through life so bravely? All he meant was that if I needed to turn to anyone for advice—well, he thought you men were so wise."

"Maybe Harry didn't remember just what was in the letter your father dictated. He may have quoted it wrong."

"He showed me the letter."

"Ugh! He did! You mean he had it with him."

"Yes. He had it in his billfold."

"That proves that you can't quit us, Carlotta! It proves how much that—that feeling we have—means to the whole desk. So the boss had the letter with him—I!"

"Don't think I don't appreciate such kindness, Horace. When I cried it was partly because I realized there was such gentleness and goodness in the world. But to be left as a burden, a care, on—oh, there's no use talking about it! My father never meant it. He never asked favors. He never let me. He would be humiliated if he knew."

ARLIN gazed upon her with new admiration. He nodded, slowly. "Carlotta, I suppose you're right. That is, as you see things. I suppose you are usually right. I can see that you have made up your mind that—well, that we of the night desk are not to be your guardians—as the gang got pleasure out of thinking."

Then Arlin had an inspiration: "Perhaps it's too many guardians, anyway, Carlotta. Maybe this is a lucky break for me—maybe. You can tell me if it is."

"For you?"

"Yes. I've been letting myself wonder, for a long time, if just one of the night desk couldn't better look out for you. Just one. Not much of a fellow, but he'll try hard. I mean, do you think you care enough for me, Carlotta, to be my wife? Believe me, I've had the idea for a long time. Do you think you could like me as a guardian, Carlotta?"

The color flowed out of her cheeks, for a second, and then rushed back again. She looked into Arlin's eyes steadily for a moment and then put her hands in his, across the table. "If I am to have a guardian," she murmured happily, "it must be a man I love. I love you. I have loved you since—that night—that first night."

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

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## Better Sight I.E.S. Lamp Makers





# Merry MEDDLER

BY MARTHA  
HAYS  
WEYMOUTH

**C**ISSY HARTLEY was crouched down behind old Sarah's chair, hunting for a book in the old bookcase, when Rich Wyatt came into the little parlor. He did not see her there, but went straight across to old Sarah.

Old Sarah had not seen him for more than a year. "Well, Rich!" she said, and held out her pink old hand, the one that wore the ruby. Rich planted a kiss on her wrinkled cheek, instead. Old Sarah chuckled. Nothing delighted her quite so much as impudence.

Janet Landon, behind the teacups, looked at Rich with pleasure. He was taller than ever. He was a handsome man, not a boy any longer. He stooped over and shouted something into old Sarah's black, lacquered ear trumpet,

something to which Janet paid no attention, because, just as he started to shout, Cissy popped up from behind the chair.

Janet sighed. They were going to have one of those extremely uncomfortable tea hours again, a little space out of time in which Rich sat and talked to old Sarah, and Cissy sat near the tea table and absorbed tea and accessories to pass the time.

Old Sarah saw Rich's face change, and remembered Cissy. "You know Cissy, don't you, Rich?" she said tartly.

Rich Wyatt's "How do you do?" was carefully formal. Cissy nodded indifferently and picked up her empty cup.

"May I have some tea?" she said to Janet.

Janet filled the cup and passed Cissy the cookies, forgetting for the moment that Cissy did not care for them. Cissy seemed to forget, too, for she took one from the plate and ate it hastily.

Old Sarah's eyes twinkled. "Pull up your chair, Rich," she said genially, "and tell me about yourself."

**R**ICH looked down at the back of Cissy's head. She had taken a seat on the divan, elaborately forgetful of his presence. Rich turned back to old Sarah.

"No, thanks," he said. "I'm busy today, getting settled in Doc Collinwood's office. I just dropped in to say hello."

Old Sarah smiled cynically. "Well, if



FULL-COLOR ILLUSTRATION IN WATER COLOR BY ROY SPRIET

you must go . . ." she said, distinctly.

Rich put on the overcoat that he had just removed, and, with a nod to Janet, turned and went out again.

"Nice boy," said old Sarah. "Don't you think so, Cissy?" Her bright black eyes bored into the girl's blue ones.

Cissy flushed, and put down her teacup so suddenly that it rattled in its saucer. She put her mouth close to the black trumpet, shouted, very loud, "No!" picked up her gloves, and went out.

Old Sarah watched through the window until she saw Cissy vanish into the house on the north, and then the old lady began to laugh. Not aloud, but in that odd way she had of laughing all over her ample body, in silent chortlings

*Matchmaking was old Sarah's chief joy in life. She could even invent a cold if she had to—to get Dr. Wyatt to call*

that even shook the chair in which she was sitting.

Janet shook her head. "I don't think that's funny," she said to the black trumpet.

"I don't imagine you do, Janet," said old Sarah meaningly. "Your funny bone is sort of lazy, sometimes."

Janet cleared her throat. "I don't see anything funny about it," she repeated. "It's plain crazy that they should act this way, just because Rich's mother married and divorced Cissy's father several years before either of

these two foolish youngsters was born."

"And how," said old Sarah, "would you have them act?"

"Why," said Janet, "they ought to be friends. They oughtn't to hate each other so."

"Do you think they hate each other?" old Sarah asked thoughtfully.

Janet stared. "Would they act this way if they didn't?"

"Perhaps," said old Sarah. "Anyway, it's not their fault. Rich and Cissy were brought up to hate each other. Cissy's grandfather hates Rich's mother because she divorced Cissy's father, and he's a stubborn old man, and wouldn't change his stand for all the money in the world. And Rich's mother is so proud she jeans over backward. What would



you expect of Rich and Cissy, under the circumstances, Janet?"

"I'd expect them to think for themselves," Janet said firmly.

Old Sarah chuckled. "They did try to think for themselves once. They were in high school then. Rich was president of his class and Cissy was editor of the annual, and I guess they sort of liked each other. Cissy's grandfather found Rich sitting on the front porch steps one day and fired him off. Rich defied him, and he and the old man quarreled. Cissy's grandfather said some hard things about Rich's mother and Rich called him a liar, and Cissy took her grandfather's part, and those two haven't said a civil word to each other since."

Janet sighed. "It's too bad," she said.

"It's plumb foolish," old Sarah said. "Something ought to be done about it. Clear away the tea things, Janet—I want to think."

OLD Sarah's days rose to and descended from the tea hour, four to five, any afternoon. It had been Janet's first duty, ever since she had come to keep house for her elderly cousin, to see that the sandwich filling, cakes, cookies, and fine tea never ran out, and that the kettle was always kept ready at teatime. Janet used to wonder, in the first days, why it was that no one ever came to call at any other hour, except in emergencies, but she soon found that old Sarah discouraged such a practice, and when old Sarah discouraged anything she did it with a most effective thoroughness.

There were only two exceptions to this rule—Rich Wyatt and Cissy. Old Sarah had hardly finished her breakfast next morning, when Cissy came running across the lawn and into the kitchen. Old Sarah looked at her young friend. Cissy sank down into one of the kitchen chairs with a laugh.

"It's a grand morning, Aunt Sarah," she shouted into the black trumpet.

Old Sarah looked out of the kitchen window. A cold February sun was casting unimpressive shadows and there was a suggestion of snow in the air.

"I can't say," old Sarah said tartly, "that I see much excuse for exuberance on this particular morning. You're young, that's all. When you get to the place where your ankles mistreat the rest of your body, as mine do, and you have to carry your hearing around by a long black handle, you'll not find February weather quite so exhilarating."

Cissy picked up a teaspoon and held it, lorgnette fashion, and stared haughtily across at old Sarah. "Stuff and nonsense!" she said crisply.

Old Sarah laughed. She pointed a finger at Cissy, and asked, "So you don't think Rich Wyatt is a nice boy, eh?"

Cissy sobered at once. She got up and walked to the window and looked out. Then she turned around and said slowly, "Aunt Sarah, you're an interfering old busybody."

Old Sarah laughed. "You never were afraid of me, were you?"

Cissy smiled gently. "No," she said.

"But you didn't answer my question."

"Yes, Aunt Sarah," Cissy said. "I think Rich Wyatt is probably a very nice boy. But I'm always seeing him, and he makes me uncomfortable. I wish he'd go off to Timbuktu or some other nice, remote place. He's an infernal nuisance."

Old Sarah leaned back in her chair and shook. She had not expected such



*Henry Hartley, his dignified old head held high, walked out through the door*

an answer, and she adored surprises. She took one of Cissy's hands and patted it.

"You ought to be friends, you two," she said.

Cissy drew back. "Friends! That's impossible, Aunt Sarah. You forget Grandfather!"

Old Sarah shook her head. "No, my dear; I'm remembering him very vividly. Your grandfather," she said, "needs a good spanking."

Cissy giggled. "Who'd spank him?"

Old Sarah stared at her. "I might do it myself," she said. "Now, go away, Cissy. I want to think. But come back for tea!"

Cissy leaned over and shouted, "All right, if you'll have cucumber sandwiches!"

"Cucumbers," said old Sarah, "are out of season."

"Have them, anyway."

Old Sarah pointed to the door and chuckled. "Git!" she said.

Cissy laughed and went.

Old Sarah finished her breakfast, and arose from her chair laboriously. As she had set her rheumatic ankles were not kind to her considerable bulk, and though she walked when she had to, she made those occasions as few as possible.

"Janet," she said now, "see that we have cucumber sandwiches this afternoon, and call Rich Wyatt and tell him to drop in at teatime. Tell him that I have a cold and I want to see what kind of a doctor he is."

Janet stared at her. "You haven't any cold," she said.

Old Sarah twinkled. "No," she said, "but by teatime I shall have."

So Janet telephoned the young doctor. Sure enough, just before four, Rich Wyatt's little coupé pulled up in front of old Sarah's white cottage, and old Sarah, after a few minutes in the bathroom, had developed alarming symptoms of a head cold. Janet was concerned, and Rich, hearing the old lady's convincing snuffle, looked both surprised and anxious.

"You'd better give me a good dose," the old lady said, her black eyes gleaming wickedly. "A cold's mighty likely to turn into pneumonia, at my age."

Rich eyed her speculatively. "You didn't have a cold yesterday," he said.

"You didn't stay long enough to find out," she retorted.

RICH flushed deeply. He said nothing, but took a tongue depressor from his black bag and stuck it into old Sarah's mouth. She glared at him, and he laughed at her. Old Sarah spat out the stick decisively as soon as she could, and pointed that accusing finger at Rich. "Don't you do that again, Rich Wyatt!"

"I had to look at your throat," he protested, smiling.

"Not when I'm talking to you, you don't," she said. "Now, why did you run away yesterday?" She held the black trumpet up to him imperiously.

"You know as well as I do," he retorted.

"I never thought you were a coward," she said.

Janet poured the tea and watched Rich. He stood very straight and his chin set.

"I'm no coward," he shouted down. "You know I couldn't stay when Cissy Hartley was here."

"Why not?" insisted old Sarah.

"Because of Mother. She wouldn't have liked (Continued on page 175)

99%  
Honest

(Continued from page 19)

employees, 4.14 per cent; executives, 3.74 per cent; railroad workers, 2.62 per cent; landlords and builders, 1.01 per cent. The remainder were divided equally between brokers and housewives. Here is convincing evidence that the mass credit upon which mass production reposes emanates largely from the ordinary worker.

Then I looked at more intimate family details. On analyzing the records of 1,000 automobile purchasers, I found that the average monthly installment was \$37.27; the average age of the purchaser, 36 years; the percentage married, 70; the average monthly income, \$154.97. My investigation of 429 refrigerator and other household appliance accounts revealed an average monthly installment of \$7.50; average age of 37 years; 90 per cent were married, while the average monthly income was \$126.62.

TWO striking facts emerge from these figures, which are typical of the country: First, nearly 60 per cent of all credit accounts are for automobiles. Second, the average annual income of the great majority of installment buyers is approximately \$1,800 a year, the standard income of 10,487,750 American families.

While automobiles and household appliances have the bulge on sales volume, an almost infinite variety of other types of purchase compete in human interest. In a survey in 8 big cities, ranging from Boston to Salt Lake City, I have discovered that tourist camps, filling stations, glass eyes, baby carriages, display cases for shops, plumbing equipment, rugs, and watches have come into the field of installment buying. One Boston periodical reader gets his entire year's supply of magazines through a sales finance company.

Oddly enough, the most durable, and therefore the most desirable piece of security, is exempt from sales financing procedure. Years ago, when sewing machines and furniture were being sold on time payments, a few sales financiers refused to finance the installment sale of diamonds on the ground that they were luxuries. That dictum now has become a general mandate for the business.

Although the householder with an \$1,800-a-year income bulks biggest in this mass credit business, you may be surprised to learn that installment buying, like indigestion, is the leveler of all ranks. It is

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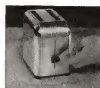
It's a speedy toaster—and an economical one, using no current except when actually toasting. It's a modern toaster, in beauty as well as efficiency, surpassed only by the larger Toast-

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Ask your dealer to show you this "Junior" toaster. You will find it, with other fine Toastmaster products, wherever quality appliances are sold. . . . McGraw Electric Co., Toastmaster Products Division, Minneapolis, Minn.



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Drop in bread. Press  
down lever. Current  
goes on.



UP . . . OFF!  
Touch lever. Up pops  
toast. Current goes  
off.

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I know what's wrong with most family budget plans—the savings are looked upon as a "rainy day fund"—which means that these families are saving up for something disagreeable—and it seems like burying the money to put it in a savings bank. Now here's an idea that makes a magical change: look at your savings as a reward fund—money for something you will enjoy—then, believe me, you'll pile the money into the bank.

Since stone ax days man has been the *getter*, woman the *keeper*. I have no patience with husbands who try doing both jobs alone. It's only when the wife takes her share of the responsibility that you find a family pocket-book that's never flat.



I just read this: "A child is as God made him; a man is what he has made of himself." I guess mighty few of us are entirely satisfied with what we see in the mirror. What I do know is that just one year of self-denial, temperance, frugality, paying bills promptly, and cheerfulness would beauty and character into a face as easily as if it were clay.

I don't suppose you ever thought that money matters and the family budget could be funny. Well, let me send you, free, an amusing illustrated book about family budgeting that will take a load off your mind in five minutes. I defy any husband to read this book and not appoint his wife treasurer of the family pocketbook then and there. Just mail the coupon below. There's no charge.



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likely that your congressman, even your senator, is buying, or has bought, his car on deferred payments. A widely known \$50,000-a-year amusement executive in New York bought a \$5,000 car on a 24-months contract. Being a generous spender, he regarded the process as compulsory savings. Many actors (not Hollywood Croesuses) whose earnings are sometimes as fickle as public favor, find it convenient to buy cars on the installment plan. The same is true of well-to-do women whose incomes are received twice yearly.

Not long ago one of the chief executives of a great sales financing company returned home, to find his wife highly elated. She led him to the butler's pantry, where she displayed a glistening new \$300 refrigerator. Then she said, "I bought it on the installment plan." When he protested that she would have saved money by purchasing it for cash she said, "I wanted to practice what you preach."

Thus the butcher, the baker, and the factory worker are joined by the man of affairs in the great parade of the installment-buying public, and the little man's credit proves to be just as sound as that of the big one.

THERE are two types of security behind the installment sales contract. The first is the lien or mortgage held by the company on the article financed. One of the basic rules of the business is that the life and utility of the commodity must outlast the period of payment. The other security is the character of the buyer. You may ask, "How does character enter the picture when the bailiff, figuratively, is at the door ready to seize the goods in case of default?" The lien or mortgage acts as a sort of policeman whose club is invoked only for a fractional number of people.

The experience of well-managed companies is that out of every 100 installment sales contracts financed, 95 are promptly repaid on the payment dates. Four out of the 100 must be jacked up after a month's lapse or nursed along with a reduction in installments and a wider spread of payments, but they pay. Only one out of the 100 defaults.

When an installment purchaser defaults, his purchase is foreclosed by due process of law and seized. But that is putting it harshly. Most such foreclosures are euphemistically known as "repossession." Even that is not quite accurate. The sales financing company does not want possession. It wants its money. So, as quickly as possible, the repossessed commodity is resold. But even here the installment buyer gets a break these days. Very often the repossessed commodity is resold for a sum large enough to pay the sales financing company the balance due and to partly reimburse the defaulter for the installments he has paid out.

Not long ago, in Illinois, a man who had paid about \$800 on a \$1,000 motorcar over a period of eighteen months, suffered such losses in business that he could not continue his payments. A sales financing company repossessed the car, which was still in good condition, and resold it for \$650. Out of this the company took \$200 due on the first purchase and returned \$450 to the original buyer. He was out, therefore, only \$350 on his purchase. At the same time, he had had the use of a good car for a year

and a half. He couldn't have had it any cheaper.

The national record of a one per cent loss in a \$4,000,000,000 financial turnover in 1935 refutes the common idea that the last thing an American family wants is careful supervision of family finance. There is no question of our honesty. Sales financing has simply organized and disciplined that honesty.

But it has achieved something else, thereby providing another bulwark for mass credit. The late E. H. Harriman once said, "I have more respect for a man who owes a million dollars than for a man who has a million dollars. It shows that people have confidence in him." The same applies to the artisan or clerk who buys a \$700 car or a \$150 refrigerator. The fact that he has credit backs him up morally and increases his responsibility.

The lengths to which people go to meet their monthly payments is shown by a remote trapper on the Canadian border. In midwinter he sledges a hundred miles on the first of every month to pay his installment on a \$100 radio. Not long ago a farmer walked into the district office of a sales financing company in Iowa saying, "I am shy on cash but I have a load of garden truck outside. Can I pay my installment with it?" The office force took the garden truck off his hands and from it realized enough to meet the debt.

Most defaults occur after the first monthly payment, when the purchaser feels that he or she has only a limited ownership in the commodity and when the resale value is highest.

Humor is not lacking in the defaulting end. An ex-Follies girl got behind in her installments on a car and finally tendered a diamond ring for the payments due. It turned out to be phony. A man in New York who owed three installments on an expensive automobile was found to be a bigamist. He disappeared. Information concerning his whereabouts came from the current wife. Her reason for betraying him was not that he was so much wedded, but that he was using the car to take another wife on a long joy ride.

THE so-called "skip" gives the sales financiers their only headaches. A "skip" is a person who skips out with the goods. Since the motorcar is on wheels, it is literally the vehicle for most of the getaways. It is not always easy going, however. Relentless search, not unmixing with ingenious ruse, usually runs the skipper down.

A Philadelphia doctor who had paid only two installments on an expensive car left for parts unknown. The company subsequently learned that he had gone to Chicago. His name was not in the city directory or the telephone book, so the company's loss-and-salvage man devised a unique scheme to land him. A big medical convention was in session in Chicago. Suspecting that the doctor would attend, the salvage man bribed a page boy to ask a presiding officer to announce that an urgent call had come in for the defaulter. When the doctor answered, "Here," envisaging a lucrative case, the salvage man sat down beside him and said, "How about the payments on that car?" The doctor came across.

No less ingenious was the running down of an Ohio jeweler who made one payment on a car and vanished with it. Every ef-

fort to trace him failed. After three years had passed the company charged the account off to profit and loss. But the loss-and-salvage man said to himself, "This jeweler is probably a subscriber to a trade paper. There lies the clue." Laboriously he went through various subscription lists, to discover, in the end, that his man was a subscriber to a New York weekly and was located in New Orleans. There he journeyed, and got the overdue money.

The man who plucks a coupon from his installment book and sends it to the district office with a remittance on the first of every month may think that the financing of cars and other relatively small commodities constitutes the total of sales financing. There is another phase that makes the big corporation a member of the installment buying club. It is the financing of industrial equipment sales.

This procedure—a development of the last ten years—is not intended to supplant the normal functions of bank loans or security issues in funding capital debt. It does, however, fill an intermediate credit need that cannot be supplied by such financing. It also opens the market to an important field of buyers to whom these sources of credit are not available.

Cities and factories go shopping precisely like the little fellow, make down payments, and pay the balance over a long period. But they buy such things as a municipal power plant, a Diesel engine, a coastwise freighter, a battery of printing presses, dairy machinery and equipment, X-ray machines for hospitals, or air-conditioning equipment for a theater or building. However, while John Jones pays \$250 down and \$21 a month for 24 months for a motorcar, a coal corporation (to cite a concrete case) paid \$265,287 down for a \$1,225,267 strip mining shovel and \$43,000 a month for 23 months.

At least one major power tried to join the industrial equipment wing of the installment fraternity. Shortly after Mussolini launched the African war, his agents in the United States sought to purchase six oil tankers on monthly payments. Sanctions frustrated the project.

SIXTY per cent of the mammoth incubators which hatch nearly half the eggs in the United States are sales financed. The cost range is from \$3,000 to \$12,000, with a 25 per cent down payment and a 4-year contract. Installments are paid after the hatch. They are skipped during the dead season.

More illuminating than these cost figures is the fact that the mammoth incubator industry is a good index to future egg and chicken prices. There is a 3-year cycle between the egg in the incubator and the chicken on the market. In 1932, when incubator sales financing dropped considerably, the companies knew that eggs and chickens would be dear in 1935. And dear they were. Not that the companies sold eggs and chickens short. The point is that sales financing is a barometer of business.

Such is the drama of mass credit, enacted by a cast recruited from millions of well-equipped homes. It is a revolution which has lifted the average man to a level of living once reserved for a few, and it has been accomplished not through force and political power, but through the honesty of the American people.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

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## Try This Remarkable "PHILLIPS" Way Thousands are Adopting

On every side today people are being urged to *alkalize* their stomach. And thus to ease the symptoms of "acid indigestion," nausea and stomach upsets. For perhaps the vast majority of stomach upsets come from an excess of acidity.

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**BELL TELEPHONE SYSTEM**

# Crossroads

(Continued from page 29)

superintendent," she said, a little confused.

"You say 'simply,'" he said, with an air of tripping her up. "But there is nothing simple in all this."

"When it's all running so smoothly it's simple enough."

Dr. Pitcher looked at her meditatively. "Some day I'd like to go over it with you."

"It would surprise you! It's anything but sanitary," Gloria laughed. "Some of the rooms look like rummage sales, and someone is always cooking."

"BUT surely—" he said, with a slight frown. He stopped; she was aware he was deliberately abandoning the subject. After all, it wasn't his business! "You're going out?" he asked.

"Thursday afternoon. I always go home after lunch, and don't come back until after supper."

"You're walking?"

"It's only half a mile."

"May I walk with you, then? . . . I was speaking of my patient tomorrow. Dr. Walker and Dr. Street will come over; we're to try the gland transplantation. It will be very interesting. But of course we must have a nurse."

"I'll give you Partridge; she's the best we have. The others are only practical nurses, most of them. . . . She says she's madly in love with you, too," Gloria added in her thoughts; "it'll give her a break. . . . We want," Gloria said aloud, "we want to start a training school some day, but of course I'm not qualified to manage that, and we'd have to build on quite a big wing."

"How long has the sanatorium been open?"

"About three years, this time." Gloria laughed. "It's had all sorts of ups and downs," she went on. "An old German woman opened it first, for her friends, really. It was just an old wooden house then, with bay windows and a cupola. She made quite a lot of money and retired. Then a Miss Lockwood bought it; she was clever, too. But unfortunately she drank."

Karl Pitcher laughed out suddenly, and Gloria's serious expression broke into laughter, too.

"That's when I first came here," she said. "That's—oh, almost six years ago. The old people liked her. And she really was wonderful with them. It was from her that I got the idea of letting them really live their own lives, and die their own way if they wanted to! But the whole place ran down terribly; people would come here to look at rooms and there wouldn't

be a room in order, and poor Caroline—Miss Lockwood, that was—would totter out of her room reeking—"

"So you took hold?"

"No; the Bayview Sanatorium and Home took hold; it was a company. They had no use for me; they put tons of money into it, rebuilt it practically; it all went terribly modern and sanitary and efficient. Only—people wouldn't come live in it."

They were nearing the little Spanish farmhouse with the Scotch name now, and as her eye fell upon two figures in the lane Gloria suddenly broke away from her companion and ran like a skimming bird toward them. The man heard the ecstasy of her cry: "Ah, my darling! Come here and kiss your Mummy!"

She was on her knees, the child caught in her arms. She turned her radiant face to smile at the doctor, over her shoulder, as he came up, and he saw that the child's golden-brown eyes were like hers and that the dark gold-brown of her young head mingled exactly in color with his.

"Dr. Pitcher, this is my little boy, Jimmy, this is the new doctor, over at the sanatorium that I told you about. And this is Carmela, Doctor, who takes such good care of Jimmy."

"We came to meet you," Jimmy said.

"You did indeed! This is where we live, Doctor. Will you come in and meet my mother, and perhaps—Is Mr. Rudd home, Carmela?"

"He said he'd get the four-fifteen."

"Ah, then he won't be home yet. But if you'll come in we'll take good care of you, Doctor, and give you something cool to drink. You'll have to dine with us sooner or later, and meet Dr. Baggle—no, not your kind. He's a scientist; he's 'way up in engineering or something. I don't know quite what the letters are. But he's our neighbor, and we think they're the most interesting people on the hill."

She had risen from her knees, but she was still stooping sidewise to hold tightly to the child. He was a handsome child, the man thought. Two girls of perhaps eight or nine, twins in faded, colorless smocks, had now come racing to the scene; he saw their enthusiastic greeting of "Aunt Glory," heard their triumphant shout: "You're coming to our house tonight for supper! We're having peach and marshmallow ice cream. Molly's making it!"

"These are the Baggle girls," Gloria said, disentangling herself from their pipestem arms. "You won't stay, Doctor? I'm privileged to ask anyone I like to Mrs. Baggle's."

He shook his head, left her.

GLORIA and the children went in at the Baggle's gate. Tony was in his chair on the lawn. He looked up and smiled.

"They found you, eh? Peter home?"

"No; Jimmy said he'd gone to town. So I came in to ask why we're coming to supper here tonight?"

"Special occasion. The Jardines are here. They motored out for the trip, and went up into the Sierras for ten days. Now they're on their way home."

"Doctors, eh?"

"Yep. Brothers. Research men."

"Oh, Tony, then we ought to have Dr. Pitcher, too."

"Pitcher? You mean—of course, the new man here at the Bayview. That's right. Well, Kitty'll be back and I'll have



her telephone him. He probably knows 'em. Has he ever mentioned them?"

"Not to me. But I've hardly talked to him at all—until today, that is. He walked here with me just now, but he wouldn't come in. He's been terribly busy."

"Nice-looking?"

"Yes; in a way. Terribly keen and smart-looking. Glasses. He's not tall—sort of sandy."

"Married, I suppose?"

"No; he's not. His mother's with him, but she's lame—she's in bed most of the time." Gloria was not thinking of what she was saying; she had fallen into thought. "Have you any idea what took Peter in to town?" she asked.

"I didn't know he had gone. He was over here with the bean poles this morning and didn't say anything about it. He and Kitty were talking about dinner tonight."

"Peter thinks there's no one like Kitty."

"Well, Kitty thinks Peter can do no wrong. Good thing, too. She's lonely, up here on the hill, and she and Pete are tremendously congenial."

"I don't think Kitty is ever lonely, Tony."

"You were lonely," the man said significantly.

"No, I wasn't lonely, Tony! No woman could be lonely, with a baby and mother and husband and neighbors. I was just—I don't know what to call it—restless. My getting a job simplified everything, especially as Peter was laid off his."

Gloria was silent for a moment, looking at her companion expectantly.

"YOU think I was wrong, don't you, Tony, to get a job when Peter was so violently against it? But he's long ago come to the conclusion—he's said so a hundred times—that I was right."

"No; I think you were right," Tony said. "That is," he added, "I think you were as right as anyone is who makes a courageous decision."

"You mean a right decision?"

"Well, a choice," Tony amended it. "But the alternative gave me no choice at all!" Gloria argued.

"You remember we discussed this three years ago. You said that then."

"I know. But you didn't quite agree with me then, and you don't now. But look here, Tony, if a man—really through no fault of his own, in bad times or in unusual circumstances—can't support his wife and child, and a woman can, and wants to, why on earth *shouldn't* she?"

"She makes her choice."

"Nonsense! You keep saying that. She has no choice. When I went over to the Bayview three years ago all the money that we four had was Mother's hundred a month. Peter'd lost his job. It wasn't his fault, but there it was! You don't know what it is. No man ever can know what it is for a woman to sit at home worrying about money! I'd have been an absolute fool to refuse another hundred! Now they're paying me three thousand; we have two good maids; Mother doesn't have to worry; and everything Peter makes is velvet, and who's any the worse? A woman can hold her job and keep her family together, too," Gloria said.

"If your job happened to be an office job in San Francisco, what then?"

"Why, then, I suppose, we would have moved to town. After all," Gloria argued,



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*..Goes 3 times  
as far!*



"women have been following men all over the world since time began. Why shouldn't an occasional man follow a woman?"

There was time for nothing further. Kitty returned from a trip downtown, with her arms full of packages.

"What are you having, Kits?"

"Oh, goulash. Everyone loves it, and it's easy to serve. It's on now; I fixed it as soon as I got their wire. And corn and salad and the cheese. And your Molly's making ice cream."

"Kitty, how about asking our new Dr. Pitcher tonight? He'd probably go mad with joy over meeting the Jardines."

"Oh, good idea," said Kitty. "Let's have What's-his-name, Pitcher, by all means."

WHEN the four-o'clock boat from the city whistled its mellow whistle upon reaching the Sausalito side, Gloria started for home. She had had a shower and was lying flat on her bed, rolled into a big towel wrapper, when Peter came in.

"Hello, dear!" Gloria said.

"Oh, hello; nice to find you home!"

Peter answered. He began to undress for his own shower; his face looked flushed.

"No kisses for wives?"

"Kisses for wives," Peter said dutifully, wearily. He came to bend over her and kiss her, and her arm went about his neck and drew him down. But as soon as she freed him he straightened up again and went back to his dresser. Glory felt a little chilled.

"I hear we're all going to Kitty's," she began.

"Yes. She asked a couple of Minneapolis doctors for supper and she's scared to death of them. Kitty scared!" Peter added, on an amused undertone.

"They'll have a good time," Gloria said.

"She gets 'em all!" Peter agreed affectionately.

This observation rather surprised Gloria; she spoke on a curious note: "Kitty? D'you think she does?"

"Oh, I don't mean sex stuff!" Peter answered scornfully. "But she's got a gift of making people comfortable—she's sympathetic. She lets men alone. She doesn't have to worry."

He went on into the bathroom and Gloria lay reflecting on this. Somehow Peter made her feel a little uneasy, a little snubbed, this afternoon. He had kissed her, but rather perfunctorily; he hadn't yet told her what his errand into town had been. When he returned from his shower and was shaving she opened the conversation with the tardy question: "What took you to town, dear?"

He answered readily enough, but without enthusiasm: "Varney telephoned me about broadcasting, and I went down to the Penny ship people, too."

"Oh. It sounds hopeful." Her tone rang a little false in her own ears. "What'd they say?"

"Can't tell yet."

"What'd it mean, Pete?"

"Traveling with a professional football outfit. Just to spell their regular man at the mike."

"It might be interesting. You'd see plenty of ball games, anyway." Did her tone add, "And Jimmy and Mother and Molly and Carmela and I can perfectly well manage without you?" Gloria felt a little panicky inside.

"I don't know," Peter said vaguely. And then suddenly, "Where's the old Scout?"

"We were at Kitty's until I heard your boat come in; he's a little late with his dinner. He'll be in."

"I'll go get him," Peter left the room.

Gloria pulled herself up from the bed and sat staring down at the floor for a few minutes. Then she took a new gown from his hanger. It had not been expensive, but she had not had a new gown for ages and she felt a thrill of almost guilty pleasure as she put it on.

THE moon shone down in a very madness of glory over Kitty's garden that night; its white light poured magic across the lawn and whitewashed the tops of the trees. Dinner had been served on the lawn; long after ten o'clock guests and hosts sat on in the circle of basket chairs, talking, talking, talking.

Gloria sat quiet, her white gown aglimmer against the darkness, her hands locked



"This is Miss Twibble—the day nurse!"

LaRior



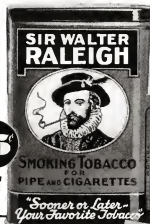
## GIRLS CALLED HIM 'BLUEBEARD'!



—because every time he let out a blast of murderous tobacco from his never-cleaned pipe they couldn't help thinking of the famous gent who assassinated six wives. A pity, too—when women love pipe-smoking done in the right way. Which is? 1. Keep your pipe tidy. 2. Switch to the tobacco that burns cleaner and smells more fragrant. We modestly admit that's Sir Walter Raleigh Smoking Tobacco—an uncommonly mild blend of Kentucky Burleys delightful to both smoker and audience. How such superlative tobacco can be only 15¢ is our worry. Try a tin. You'll bless us.

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been having a horrible time. For years now he's been trying to find just what he wants to do and can do, and—these haven't been very good years for anyone to be in that fix!

"These have been terrible years for young men," Karl agreed, with a nod. "Not you," she couldn't help saying.

"Ah, well, I'm thirty-five, and I have my profession. Your husband at thirty-five will be in quite a different position." Gloria looked at him thoughtfully; she made no comment on this.

"Peter," she presently said, "was in a banking concern when we were married. He didn't like it but he stuck it, and we bought our house and Jimmy came. Then it failed—and of course it didn't help him much to have been associated with a failure. But he did get a job, in the bookkeeping department of a store—a sort of residence expert, maybe you'd call it. But then a man in Portland wanted him to go into the used-typewriter business—no capital, he just wanted Peter's personality. Peter opened the San Francisco office, and as far as Peter went it really was a success, but he had to carry the Oregon office, and the man was simply irresponsible. He'd wire Peter for money—he got into debt—they foreclosed on him. That was about a year ago, and since then Peter's only done occasional broadcasting—little parts in plays. He likes that; he has a beautiful radio voice and he's been trying to work up to announcing. Now—just this last week—the day of Mrs. Baggle's party this was—he had a chance to go off with a professional football team and help broadcast. Of course, it's a wonderful opportunity, and if he can work up into it, it'll pay wonderfully—"

KARL had been listening intently while she talked. Now he nodded understandingly. "It takes many years for a man to find his place. I've been twenty-five years in my own profession, and I am only beginning."

"Twenty-five years!" They had entered the house now, and Jimmy was running upstairs ahead of her. "You didn't begin, I suppose, at ten?" Gloria asked smilingly.

"At ten. Exactly! I was staying in Hamburg with my mother's father—a doctor. He asked me if I would like to begin to study what I must know in order to be a doctor, and I agreed to work very hard for him. He arranged courses for me, picked out books that I could understand. From that day to this I have studied, one thing or another."

"No wonder Dr. Bruce Jardine could tell me that you were the most distinguished American in your line!" Gloria laughed. She saw the half-pleased, half-annoyed color rise under his fair skin.

"Ah, well, that was politeness!" Karl said. They were at the foot of the stairs, and Gloria nodded and smiled a good-by at him without further words, going on up to her own room.

The smile lingered; the little warm sense of pleasure in the meeting lingered. She understood some things about Karl Pitcher now that had vaguely puzzled her before. He was different—in his steadfast devotion to his work, his indifference to amusement or distraction, his complete simplicity in tastes—from any man she had ever known.

His diversion was long, swift walks up into the hills, up to the ridges where the foggy winds blew free from the ocean.

For the rest, he had his ward with its six beds and his laboratory. Almost always he had a patient or two in the ward, sometimes he had more. Always he was working among his test tubes, Bunsen burners, and measures for hours every day.

He had come to the Bayview in April; the summer months went by in a busy, happy rush for Gloria. Every day had its duties, and they were all welcome and absorbing, from the time her alarm sounded at seven until she got into bed, stretching her tired body under the cool sheet, reaching for her book at half past nine or ten.

She did not deceive herself. She knew that what lent this summer its special glamour was the proximity of Dr. Karl Pitcher. It would have been impossible for any intelligent person to be near him and not feel the magnetic current of his extraordinary personality. Some things about him she admired immensely; some things she thought unnecessarily hard and crude, harsh, almost repellent. But, liked or disliked, his was a fascinating entity; he vitalized everything he touched.

At the hospital he was almost always severely businesslike, and this without the slightest effort or affectation. His concentration upon what he was doing or attempting to do was so complete that he could address her or address the Chinese helper boy with exactly the same manner.

"Call the telephone people," he might shout across at her, leaning out of one of his windows. "Tell them my telephone isn't working! Quick, now!" Or he might appear for a distracted minute among the dawdling old people on the terrace. "This music must stop for at least one hour! I cannot have my patient awakened again!" But the nurses told her that in the surgery he was always quiet, gentle, even with clumsiness and stupidity.

The Baggleys' garden was the only spot to which he went in search of society. He never went to the city; he had no car. But he did love Kitty's garden, and Gloria saw him there in his gentlest and most relaxed mood. He and Tony were completely sympathetic; the invalid scolded him and jeered at him, and Karl took it amiably, almost gratefully, and would promise not to work so hard, not to concentrate so closely, to take things more easily and get into a habit of resting.

THE hours they all spent at Kitty's were for Gloria the happiest hours of happy summer. Perhaps Peter would be there; perhaps away somewhere for one of the endless broadcasting opportunities or tests. Jimmy was almost always a small, sleepy guest, sometimes quiet in his father's arms, sometimes stretched out asleep in Aunt Kitty's porch hammock.

When Peter was not there Karl carried Jimmy home. The way across the lane and through the gate into the Spanish patio was not long, but perhaps he would be a little out of breath when the small boy was finally landed safe in his porch bed, and Gloria, after a few minutes of fussing about in the shaded lights, pulling off small sandals, and settling the little tawny head, would lead him out to the immaculate kitchen, and while he balanced on the edge of the table and she rummaged in the ice-



box they would have a few minutes' talk.

"What do you want, Karl? Ginger ale?"

"Cold water. Nothing else!"

"It would take me only two minutes to run you home."

"No, no. I want the walk!"

That would be about all of it, except her good night on the porch, and his business-like: "See you tomorrow!"

She must see him tomorrow; it was inevitable. A dozen times a day she saw him without any effort or seeking on her part. The consciousness of it would be like a little warm spot in her heart as she watched him walk away into the moonlight. The man was interesting!

In October Peter's break—the long-awaited break—at last arrived. He had struck upon a certain "line" in radio talk; the Chatterton Canned Soup Company was to pay him for a half-hour of "Chatterton Chat" weekly. And if one contract, Peter reasoned eagerly, why not two? Why not a dozen? Every test he had taken, every bit of experience he had had, had confirmed the gratifying fact that Peter's voice was especially well adapted to radio use, and Peter's personality, his moods, absurd or serious, could be conveyed on the air. Gloria was touched to see how he brightened, how like the old, confident Peter he became under this first bit of encouragement.

AFTER dinner, on a crisp autumn evening of winds and rattling boughs, they talked it over beside the wood fire.

"Well, now, Glory, how about Chicago?"

Peter said, coming to the subject with a little awkwardness, for it had been in both their minds for more than two days, and a certain constraint had arisen between them because of it.

"It has to be Chicago?" She sighed. A little frown crept between her eyes and she looked at the fire.

"Oh, sure. Program sent out from there. I have to keep in touch with the Chatterton people, too."

"Fifty a week," Gloria said thoughtfully.

"That's the start."

"It's a good start, Peter. And your fare paid?"

"And yours and the kid's. That is, they allow me traveling expenses, with family."

"I wish it wasn't Chicago," Gloria said.

"I was there for six months once. It's a swell city. Ball games, movies, theaters; a lot of people think it's more fun than New York. They say they have finer clothes there than anywhere else except Paris."

"Peter, do you think it's wise to move Jimmy into that cold winter? He's slept out of doors practically every night of his life."

Peter looked at her. "Don't want to go," he stated, rather than asked, slowly.

"It isn't that. I think we have to think it over pretty carefully. We'd have an apartment, of course. Unless we had three bedrooms—and I don't suppose we could afford that, we'd be terribly cramped. Mother gets terribly nervous if Jimmy's in the room with her. She adores him, of course, but she keeps waking up to see if he's covered—that sort of thing."

"Your mother'd come too?" Peter asked, after a pause.

Gloria smiled at him appealingly.

"Well, I'd have to suggest it. She mightn't."

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# Pardon me for interrupting, but...



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Every year thousands of readers write in just before Christmas, requesting that gift subscriptions be sent to their friends. You know, the usual eleventh-hour decision! As a result, clerks are rushed to distraction, announcement cards are delayed in the holiday mail—disappointment all around. But this year it needn't happen to you—because I'm tipping you off in advance...

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But if she didn't she couldn't do much here on her hundred a month."

"No; that's true."

"And meanwhile I give up three thousand a year."

"You give up an awful lot of hard work with it."

"It's not hard work now. We'd have, in Chicago, your two hundred—with two hundred a year extra for the extra weeks, and Mummy's hundred every month. That's all. Have you any idea what rent we'd have to pay?"

Peter ruffled his hair, laughed his old, boyish laugh. "Oh, heck, other people do it! Let's take a chance. It isn't much to start on, but the Chatterton people are big people; it's a wonderful ad for me and another one like it would put us on Easy Street! You don't want to plug along in the sanatorium all your life! It was swell while we needed it. Now we're launched!"

"You've a year's contract. What if they don't renew?"

Peter laughed again, came across the hearthrug, and knelt down beside her chair, locking a big arm about her. "Listen, you're not talking like my girl! What are you afraid of? We've always gotten along! Come on—let's pack up and take a chance! We can always rent this place for interest and taxes."

"I hate myself for talking this way, Pete, honestly I do. But wouldn't it be wiser to have you go ahead, see how things work, and have me join you in the sport with Jimmy?" She had leaned her soft cheek against his; her fragrant loosened waves of hair were touching his own.

"I LOVE you, Glory!" Peter said.

Gloria made no response in words; she merely leaned against him a little closer.

"Do you realize that you're a wonderful woman?" Peter asked.

"Ha!" she said, unimpressed.

"No, but you are. Where'd we have been without you and your job these last few years?"

"You were having bad luck. Loads of men were. Statistics say—I think it was forty per cent of the men were looking for jobs, and only nine per cent women."

"I don't know anything about statistics—I know I adore my wife," Peter said, kissing her hair, her temples, her chin. "I'll need you in Chicago, Glory. We always talk things over. I'd be lost without you and the Scout."

"But, Peter, if anything went wrong we'd have burned our bridges behind us."

"Oh, gosh, we'd be onto new bridges by that time!"

"Look, darling. Mother's settled here and she's happy. Jimmy's little routine goes like clockwork between her and Molly and Carmela and me. We have plenty of money to keep things going until you're sure of your job. Just as soon as you wire me that there's another contract or that the Chatterton people want to renew, we'll come on. Meanwhile, you'll really have a better chance, you'll really feel freer and easier in your mind than if we were there complicating things!"

Peter was not listening, although he was watching her mouth intently. "The question is, do you love me?" he asked.

"I do," Gloria laughed in the familiar reply. "But, seriously, don't you think I'm right, Peter?" she persisted.

"Do you love me as much as when

we were first married?" Peter pursued.

"Oh, you idiot! Of course."

"I love you terribly," he said. "I'll do anything you want me to, as long as you love me. That's all I have, Glory; that's the one miracle I've ever known—that a woman like you should still love me, a bum who can't get a job—"

"You idiot," she said again.

"No, but I do love you, Glory, and sometimes I'm horribly afraid that—since you're so smart, and I've had so much bad luck and have done so many dumb things, I've been afraid that you'd simply get tired of me. Grow away from me."

"What do you think?" she asked lazily.

"What I want to think is that you'll really come on and join me if I go ahead. And maybe you're right—you're usually right—and I ought to go on alone. Only I want to tell you," Peter concluded, his eyes suddenly watering, "the day I meet you two at the station, see you stepping down from the train, will be the happiest day of my life."

"No woman," Gloria observed in a thoughtful voice, "ought to be loved like that."

"No other woman is," Peter answered promptly.

"You talk about doing stupid things, Peter. I'm always doing stupid things, and I'm hard—I'm calculating," Gloria said humbly, all softness, sweetness. "Money matters to me; success matters. I know it. I try to relax, the way Kitty does, and let bills pile up and dust gather like plush on the rungs of the chairs, but I can't."

"You suit me," Peter told her, tightening his arm. She dropped her head on his shoulder, and the kiss that they exchanged was a lovers' kiss.

THREE days later Peter started alone for Chicago and the hazard of new fortunes. The parting was unexpectedly hard. Gloria had not for a long time felt so tender toward him as she felt when the actual last moment came and when he lifted his little Scout up for a last kiss. Jimmy was bewildered and enchanted with the confusion of the big station, but Peter's eyes were wet as he put the child down and with one last, quick kiss for Gloria turned away. They watched his window in the train, and presently he was grinning there and making signs to Jimmy. He had waited until the last moment to board the train; with a merciful swiftness it drew away into blackness and the roaring of rails, and Gloria turned back, feeling flat and strange and heartachy, to take Jimmy home.

Peter had bought her violets; they were pinned to her coat. He had gotten Jimmy a glass locomotive filled with tiny candies. The world seemed blank to Gloria; she had taken Peter rather for granted for the last year or two, but he was a part of her life, a habit, and there was a wrench about letting him go. Tonight seemed to end some phase of their married life together.

Gloria found herself shaken and depressed for several days. It was not like her to indulge in retrospection and in fears and she tried to shake them off, but although Peter had been away from home on short absences without disturbing the machinery, somehow now the house seemed lopsided and Gloria was conscious of a ridiculous impulse to rent it, bestow

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Mummy somewhere temporarily, and follow her man into the new life.

"What do you hear from Peter?" Karl asked her, one afternoon when they were walking together to the Baggleys'.

"One fine letter yesterday. And wires. But this was the first real report. I've got it with me. I'm going to read it to Kitty and Tony. He loves Chicago and I gather everybody there loves him. He's boarding with a French family, he says he's going to learn to speak French, to pronounce things right on the radio. Imagine the energy, just arriving there, and he says they're having Indian summer! It broke me up completely."

"Broke you up? But how could it be better?"

"Oh, made me homesick. I wished that we'd gone along!"

"He didn't wish that?"

"Indeed he did! But it seemed crazy to me to give up my job and take a chance like that. It may not last, you know."

"It very probably will not last if he is worrying about you and the child."

Gloria's eyes moved to his in surprise.

"Why do you say that?"

"Well, what do you think?"

"I thought you thought a man was infinitely better able to work without having a woman about!"

"Ah, for me, yes! But I don't happen to be in love with a beautiful woman who has borne me a fine son."

"You've been in love?"

"And out again. But didn't you and I decide that that was not love; that it was hunger, like the hunger of the stomach? Appetite is not love."

THEY were walking along the scented lane under a sober autumn sky; there was nothing extraordinary in the situation. But Gloria found herself trembling, confused; she held herself steady with an effort and did not dare to speak.

"If you decide that you made a mistake," Karl said, returning to the opening of the conversation, "you will go on?"

"I can't see that it was a mistake," Gloria said, troubled.

"No, you could not see that. But a French woman, you know, or a German woman," Karl said, "or any of the Nordic women—Dutch, Norwegian, Danish—would have gone along."

"On the chance it would all come out right?"

"It would be no chance to them. No choice. It would be simply what they would do. That would be marriage."

"And this isn't marriage?"

"It wouldn't be to them. It is to you. It is to any American woman. Her marriage is one event in many, to her. Another may be more important. But to other women—women of the old world—marriage is a change. Marriage is like being born."

"So that such a woman," Gloria said, in the light tone of casual conversation, "would prefer scrimping and cooking and washing dishes to helping out?"

"Oh, very much. Because that way she would have her man. And the man is the thing for her. The companionship, the love, the intimacy of their relationship, that's what she wants. Not the paid bills and the bigger house and the—well, whatever you wish to call it," Karl ended; "frocks, motorcars, servants, whatever

American women buy with their money."

"But it's ridiculous to assume," Gloria said, conscious of disliking him and speaking a little quickly to avoid showing that she was hurt, "that European women love their husbands more than we do. Yet, unless she loved him—oh, tremendously—a woman wouldn't get any happiness out of sacrificing her life to his!"

"Oh, but that's the very point. She wouldn't call it sacrificing. She'd say that to go out and work, to give up her right to her man and her children, was the sacrifice. She'd rather live in one room with him, and cook for him and make that room a home, than leave him and earn money somewhere that couldn't buy her anything she wanted half so much!"

"Well, if circumstances arise in which the wife has to help out," Gloria offered somewhat stiffly, "it seems to me it is only sensible for her to do it. If she's smart she makes money and keeps her home going, too."

"But that she can't always manage," Karl said, with just the faintest hint of significance in his tone.

Gloria flushed a little; she was not going to argue with him. She tried to think of just the right thing to say to end the conversation, could not seem to find it, and was left with the uncomfortable feeling that he had had the last word.

SHE was especially gay with Kitty and Tony when she and Karl joined them later in the garden. They sat lazily in the lawn chairs. Tony had found a commentary upon Shakespeare that he must read to them; Karl was unwontedly silent; Kitty, as always, sweet and preoccupied and quiet; but Gloria was in great form.

She looked her loveliest in a remodeled tulle dress whose tulle ruffles stood about her in a quaint wide skirt that gave almost an effect of hoops, and whose deep lace collar fell cape-fashion on her shoulders. Her round, firm throat was bare, the ruffled soft, dark gold of her thick hair was uncovered, her small gold sandals had flat heels, like a baby's slippers, and she could step as lightly and surely as a child across the grass. It pleased her to pay special attention to Tony tonight; she was like an admiring little sister, in the low basket chair beside him, watching him, listening, laughing at whatever he said.

Walking back to the sanatorium at ten o'clock with Karl, she suddenly realized that she had been feeling slightly antagonistic to him all the evening; she had still felt, deep in her spirit, the smart of his implied criticism of her way of solving her life's problems. Gloria, in her own soul, had reviewed the steps that had led her to this point, had reminded herself that she had been forced by common sense and by circumstances to take, not the easiest, but the only way. She had never deliberately selected a certain course, abandoned an alternative one. She had never said to herself, "I'd rather support myself and Jimmy than struggle along on what Peter makes." She had never been set or unpleasant about it; it had just happened so, and so, and so; and Peter and Mummy had agreed that one step had forced another, and another a third, and that Gloria always had been doing what was right and sensible. But Karl, tonight, had talked as if any woman, doing that, deliberately chose between a domestic and a business

career; put the office before the home, the income before the hearthside love of husband and babies.

But his tone now somewhat softened her. He had apparently forgotten their argument on the way; he was speaking with a sort of affectionate amusement.

"Jimmy is such a dynamo for mischief," he said. "I, myself, was a severe—a most serious child. No one played with me. No one ever laughed in my grandfather's house. We children were like little grown-ups, it seems to me now. We swam in the lake, we rode our ponies, we walked out with our tutor, my cousins and I. But there was none of that ingenious mischief! I should like to have known what you were like when you were a little girl."

"I was a happy little girl," she said thoughtfully. "My father was the sort of man who keeps the feeling of a child. He always understood children. To the end of his life he liked to pick up a baby and make love to it."

Her voice had softened, as it always did when she spoke of her father.

"To such a man, having a child of his own must seem a miracle," Karl said, and she knew he was thinking of himself. He loved children, too. They fascinated him. He would watch Jimmy and the little Bagley girls with passionate, serious attention, ask questions about them. The casual ease with which Kitty and Gloria interpreted their ridiculous questions and solved their tremendous problems was a mystery to him.

Was he thinking, she wondered, with a little prick at her heart, that Peter loved his boy, and was separated from him? If he was he gave no sign of it, but presently put a bracing hand, as hard as steel, upon her elbow to guide her over the rough bit of road.

"I SUPPOSE you get used to compliments," he said unexpectedly when they were nearing the end of the walk and the lights of the house were shining across the wide drive. He usually left her here.

"Nobody ever gets used to compliments," Gloria laughed. She could see his face now, as they stood at the foot of the steps.

"Then may I say," he asked, with a little stiff bow, "that that is a particularly beautiful gown you are wearing and that it becomes you? When you were talking to Tony tonight it seemed to me—well, shall I say it?—it seemed to me that I never had seen so lovely a picture."

"You may always say things like that!" Gloria assured him, with another pleased little laugh. But she was more deeply touched than she would show; she lingered on for a moment, a little confused, conscious of odd happiness deep somewhere within her, and a little fright, too, and a heart-shaking thrill.

"Wouldn't it be too bad—?" the man began, his smile glinting up at her in the semilight. He stopped.

"Wouldn't—what?" she asked, standing a step above him, her hand in his.

"Nothing!" he said abruptly. "Good night!"

He walked away into the darkness toward his own doorway, without a backward look. Gloria stood still for a full minute. Then she turned and went slowly up the steps and into the house.

(To Be Continued)

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(Continued from page 35)

childish. Everyone knows you two have been intended for each other almost since Lola was born. She is my closest friend."

"And yet"—Douglas rose—"and yet it has happened."

She laid her hand on his shoulder, and in the firelight he saw her wide gray eyes looking into his. "My friend"—again he felt the unmistakable honesty in her voice—"I admire you more than I admire any living man, but nothing on earth could make me disloyal to Lola. She loves you."

"I wonder."  
"Of course she loves you. If you could have seen her when she knew you were coming home—"

"But the man who came home isn't the man who stands before you today, Alison. The man Lola expected was the owner of the greatest rancho on the border. Today the Verde banks are the real owners of Miracle Mesa Ranch."

"But would that make any difference to Lola?"

"It may or may not—but it makes a difference to me. All her life she has been accustomed to the best this country can give. What can a penniless, homeless man have to offer her? He would have no right to talk of marriage to her." Faintly he smiled. "I am renounced, then."

Her own laugh was a little tremulous. "Long ago I told you I would fight by your side until the end. I will never renounce you, Juan Douglas, as a comrade in arms." "Comrade in arms," he repeated. "That at least is something."

Then together their eyes sought the window, where the form of a rider passed between them and the crimson sky. Dawn had come; the ranchers were arriving.

Six men entered—all that Douglas could place implicit trust in, but they were men whose loyalty he had never doubted, and all of them had suffered at the hands of the Brotherhood. Two were Mexicans, hardened, fearless rancheros of the border country. The others were Americans, well known to Douglas. They came in now, and one by one they bowed to Alison and shook Douglas's outstretched hand with an eloquent firmness. These were men to make allies of—men to ride knee to knee with, out where death threatened. Men to trust.

Silently they ranged themselves about the room.

Douglas spoke: "This is the first time I have asked you to come together. I shall not ask you again. Such meetings are too

dangerous. But tonight it is important that we all know just how many men we can count on and where they will be in case of need." He looked at an old Mexican near the door. "Felipe, on you I count for seven men, armed and mounted."

The Mexican inclined his head.  
"How many from you, Donovan?"

"Five."

So one by one they numbered their slender man-power, until at last Douglas said, "Thirty vaqueros. With my men and with Alison Neale's we can count on at least fifty. Fifty men armed and ready—it will be enough."

"You have found out where the raiders hide, friend?" Felipe asked.

"Not yet. But I have a plan that may lead to them, and in it all of you can help me. I will only tell you this: Today I am going to Verde to bring back fifty head of pure-blood horses sent up from Mexico. I expect to graze them on my lower range. Tell people of this as you ride—tell them Juan Douglas is importing pureblood horses into the valley and that to lose them would mean ruin to him."

He spoke slowly, emphasizing each word, and in response they nodded, each content to do his bidding without knowing the reason, trusting him with that instinctive loyalty which the border ranchers had always yielded the masters of Miracle Mesa.

"And now one last word. From your ranches each of you can see Miracle Mesa. When the day comes to gather together there may not be time to send word, but a flare will burn from the top of the mesa. Unless I tell you otherwise, we will meet at the head of the Arroyo Grande, each man mounted on his fastest horse. My own vaqueros will bring extra rifles." He looked up, his sensitive face grown serious. "For some of us, friends, that will be our last ride. Whoever is not willing to pay this price for freedom, let him not come."

He finished, and the men rose to their feet. "We'll be waiting for that flare," Donovan said. Then one by one they went out into the morning light.

**T**OGETHER Alison and Douglas watched those figures quietly mount and ride away, while a sense of comradeship in this last adventure kindled in their eyes. At last the girl spoke: "The old spirit of the border still lives in men like these."

"And in you." The words were very low. "There is no one quite like you in the world, Alison. I am very proud of you." He said no more, but reached for his gauntlets, yet something had awakened, something which neither of them clearly understood. It was as if in that quiet room and in that moment of silence a new and precious intimacy sprang into being, enveloping the girl. Then the spell snapped, and Alison drew a long breath.

"If you're going toward the mission, I'll ride with you." She spoke with an effort. "Antonia, the padre's cook, has a child sick with fever. I'm trying to care for her."

Douglas opened the door. Outside, Russell and the ranger were standing by their horses, and together the four rode through the summer morning, up toward the mission. Already it had grown warmer. Heat waves were beginning to play out over the face of the desert, but the foothills still lay in shadow, and toward them the horsemen turned.

Less than a mile distant from that little



cavalcade a figure kneeling in the mesquite watched them pass; then, hurrying down to an arroyo, mounted and rode south at full gallop. He was not the only furtive messenger. On the first shoulder of the foothills another horseman sighted those four far-off riders and, keeping back beyond the fringe of pine, rode along the ridge until, certain at last of their direction, he doubled back to a narrow canyon where a dozen of his companions awaited him.

Unconscious of this watchful scrutiny and heedless of this gradual encircling movement going on about them, the four riders trotted through sagebrush and cactus, then one by one descended the steep sides of a dry watercourse just on the edge of the desert. It was a steep, narrow trail made even more precarious by loose stones, and halfway down Douglas saw Alison's horse stumble, recover its footing, then draw up sharply, dead lame.

Instantly Alison dismounted to examine the pony's foot, but Record, wise in the ways of horses, shook his head and, kneeling beside her, felt the swelling tendons. "It's a nasty sprain," he pronounced. "You won't be able to more than walk him for the next two weeks, miss."

In desperation the girl looked up. "But I've got to get to the mission. Antonia's depending on me."

Douglas turned to the ranger. "Let Alison ride your pinto, Sam," he suggested. "You and Bob can go back by way of her ranch and pick up another horse."

But Record's eyes were dubious. "That means leaving you alone."

"Why not? Who can catch Coronado? I'll go as far as the mission with Alison, then cut across to Verde in time to meet the boys."

Still only half convinced, Record reluctantly changed saddles and turned his little pinto over to the girl. Then, with Russell following, the ranger left them.

**A** LONG, mesquite-covered slope led up to the mission, stretching from the desert to the lower foothills in a broad band of almost impassable thorn growth and dwarfed oaks. It was near the edge of this mesquite thicket that Douglas drew rein.

Something was wrong. It may have been a new alertness in the movements of Coronado; it may have been his own response to some sight or sound too elusive to detect, but something was signaling a vague warning of danger. Leaning forward in the saddle, Douglas searched the horizon with questioning eyes. Behind him the desert lay glittering and empty, and his searching scrutiny shifted to the foothills. A slight movement. His eyes fixed with instant attention, then silently he pointed. Up on the ridge to the left, outlined against the sky, four riders walked their horses in single file, keeping pace with Alison and himself.

Douglas shook his head. "I don't like it. They see us—look—now they've stopped." Signaling the girl to follow, he lifted the reins and, turning sharply to the right, made at a quick trot for the edge of the mesquite.

Standing in his stirrups as he rode, he looked behind him, then, with a low exclamation, halted once more. There, emerging from an arroyo less than a mile away, another group of mounted men was closing in. This time all doubt vanished—the deadly net of the raiders was beginning to



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spread about him. Behind him, on either side, watchful figures rode unhurryingly, as if already certain of their quarry, and even as he watched them Douglas thought of those others who had been hunted down in just this leisurely and fiendish way.

Up on the ridge to the left the first group of horsemen had halted and now, four abreast, began slowly to descend. Time for the kill. Still Douglas hesitated. One way alone might lie open—within that thick growth of oak and mesquite he and Alison might for the time find safety.

Dark, mysterious, and foreboding, the low wall of grayish leaves rose before him. Was that, too, part of the trap—to tempt him into this jungle? Its proffered concealment could be made to serve for ambush as well as refuge. Douglas's eyes searched the shadowy undergrowth, and once, far to the right, he thought a dark form passed and disappeared—there, too, they were waiting. Like a tightening fist they were slowly closing, holding him securely beyond all hope of escape.

RAGING at his very helplessness, Douglas wheeled. "Follow me," he said.

Without a word the girl obeyed, and both horses swerved into the mesquite. A warning call from the foothills above, an answering shout from the desert, and now, heads bent, spurs biting their horses' flanks, the riders plunged after them. The race was on.

Beneath him Douglas felt the great muscles of Coronado tighten in swift response and, making sure the girl was close behind, he gave the stallion his head. Branches lashed by them, tearing at their clothing, stinging their faces, but frantically they urged the two horses deeper and deeper into the denseness of the mesquite. Soon they found themselves entangled in a clump of thorny locust, but with lowered head Douglas urged Coronado on. The great stallion plunged; then suddenly, without warning, they burst from behind a screen of branches into a sunny open space, where in the center a band of horsemen sat with drawn guns. For the space of a heartbeat, amazement held them all, then rifles leaped to shoulders and bullets hissed among the leaves.

Whirling in his tracks, Douglas waved the girl back. Another volley. He felt a tug, a stab of pain in his shoulder, and, turning, he fired three times into the thick of that onrushing horde. They broke, making for the opposite side of the open glade, leaving one of their companions on the ground.

He knew it would be a matter of short moments before they were on his trail, but he only said, "Follow me," and struck off directly north. Twisting in and out among the low-branched oaks, they rode without a word or a glance behind. Douglas's rifle barrel felt hot to his grasp. Stinging shafts of pain were beginning to dart through his shoulder, and before he had gone half a mile his shirt was wet to the waist.

Then close behind him he heard Alison's gasp of dismay: "Jack, you're hurt!"

"Only a little."

"But you're bleeding. You can't ride like that."

Even as he turned to reassure her he knew she was right. Before long he would be too weak to keep the saddle; their only hope now lay in finding some hiding place in the mesquite.

Again he heard Alison's voice: "We can't be far from the mission. You can hide there in the old cell behind the wall." He shook his head. "The horses' tracks will tell."

"I'll take the horses and draw the raiders away."

"They'd shoot you down, Alison. The best way is to separate. You go—"

"Is that your idea of a comrade at arms?" Her eyes were blazing. "What do you think life means to me if they kill you? Jack, it's our only chance." And she brushed, by him, leading the way up the slope.

On they climbed, the maze of underbrush above them growing thinner, until soon they saw the red adobe walls that marked the cloisterlike patio of the mission. Keeping well back within the shelter of the mesquite, Alison skirted the place, then turned down an overgrown path.

In spite of a growing sense of weariness, Douglas was following close behind, and now as Alison stopped he drew up sharply beside her. Across a narrow clearing, stood a low two-room structure of stone and adobe, faded and crumbling with the years.

"We'd better go no nearer with the horses," she cautioned. "Hide in there and wait."

Knowing the riders would be on his track perilously soon, Douglas pulled his rifle from out the scabbard and dismounted. Dizzy and weak, he leaned for a moment on his horse, but before taking a step he broke a low branch from a locust tree and with it brushed out every footprint behind him as he walked toward the crumbling cell. It seemed an interminable distance, but at last he stumbled inside and looked back across the clearing. Alison and the horses had already disappeared.

IN THE shadowy gloom Douglas peered about him. The tiny room was empty and behind him a narrow passageway opened into an even smaller space. But those sharp throbs of pain were mounting to his shoulder and, suddenly dizzy, Douglas reeled, then, taking out his revolver, cocked it, laid it beside his rifle, and sat down, back against the wall.

More comfortable that way. The stone felt gratefully cool to his fevered body, his eyes were becoming drowsy. If only—From far away rose the confused shouts of men and, steadying himself, Douglas reached for the rifle. His fingers seemed curiously awkward, the rifle so heavy. Men were calling to each other out there; horses were crashing in the mesquite, coming nearer. Eyes fixed on the narrow entrance, he waited. *Fire low, fire low*, the words raced through his mind. *Wait until they reach the door and fire low*. A shout from the lower end of the clearing. That might mean they had picked up Alison's trail. A chorus of answering shouts and the stamp of horses' hoofs. Fitfully the sounds of the chase grew more distant.

Minutes passed—minutes that might have been hours. He could not tell. It was marvelously quiet within that shaded place. Then—he must have dozed—a shadow fell across the doorway, and Alison Neale entered.

Instantly alert, he looked up, and, nodding quick reassurance, she knelt at his side. "How are you?"

He tried to smile. "Anyone can have

this shoulder who wants it." And she saw with a start of alarm that the man was still bleeding.

"Did you throw them off?" he asked.

"They passed here—close."

"I left a plain trail into the mesquite, then I back-tracked and circled. Beyond the grove there was a band of horses grazing, so I hid our saddles and turned Coronado loose with the pinto. They were grazing with the others when I left. The raiders won't be looking for saddleless animals." For a moment she hesitated. "Jack, from beyond the clearing I could see another band of horsemen waiting on the other side of the mesquite. They must have known you were riding this way."

He shook his head. "No one knew."

"No one at all?"

"Perhaps—yes, Lola was there. She might have let some word drop. . . . What difference does it make?" As if weary with talk, he closed his eyes and, seeing the pallor of his face, Alison started to her feet. "I can't let you bleed like this. We've got to do something. Can you stand up?"

"I'm afraid I can't walk far."

"Just into that back room. It's safer there. I'm going to get Antonia."

"Can you trust her?" The voice was only a tired whisper now.

"I've got to trust her."

**W**EAKLY Douglas gained his feet and, throwing an arm about his waist, the girl half lifted, half guided him into the narrow room beyond. One backward glance, and she hurried toward the high adobe wall that encircled the mission. Soon she reached the little clump of dwellings occupied by the mission's caretakers and servants. At the nearer cabin she entered. A middle-aged peon woman was bending over a smoking fire and, at sight of Alison, her eyes lighted with pleasure.

"The señorita never fails me." She pointed toward the cot, where a little child lay sleeping. "She is better now. Shall I awaken her?"

"The child can wait, Antonia. It is I who need help now."

The woman said, "Whatever the señorita would have will be done."

Alison searched her face. "I have to trust you, Antonia. I am putting a man's life in your hands—more than a man's life. I am trusting you with the freedom of every hacienda in the border."

Quietly the woman answered, "I swear by every saint of heaven you can believe in me, now and always."

Alison made her decision. "Señor Douglas is wounded by the raiders. He is hidden in the old cell beyond the wall. I want bandages first of all."

Hurrying to a corner, Antonia returned with hands full of white linen. "This will serve. And here, a blanket, señorita. I will cook the broth of chicken for him that he may gain strength."

At the door Alison turned again. "Remember, no word. Not even to the padre." "As God lives," the other answered, "I will say nothing."

Hastening along the path, Alison made her way back to the door of the cell. Inside, Douglas had slumped against the wall of the inner chamber, his eyes closed, but as she entered he opened them and feebly smiled. Kneeling at his side, she tried to open the torn shirt, but blood had clotted beneath it and, drawing out his

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knife, she cut away the cloth. The bullet had passed through the thick muscles of his shoulder and out again, showing no signs of having struck the bone, but blood still oozed from an angry-looking wound. She bound long strips of linen about his shoulder, then very gently laid him back against the wall.

Hardly had she finished when the sound of voices aroused her, causing Douglas's eyes to open and his hand to reach out for the rifle; but, making a gesture of caution, Alison crept to the outer room.

On the far edge of the clearing two men stood gazing intently at the ground, and with a tremor of fear she recognized the larger as Ed Paxton. Shrinking back from the door, she watched them. They appeared to be following the tracks of two horses, and once Paxton looked across the clearing toward the cell. In another moment she heard his grating voice: "Looks like they stopped here and went back. Mebbe—" The voice ceased. His eye caught a gleam of sunlight on the branch of locust that Douglas had broken. Thoughtfully his stubby fingers felt its fresh yellow surface, and with new interest he faced again toward the cell.

"I'm just thinkin'," Paxton drew his revolver, "I'm thinkin' it might be a bright idea to look inside that place."

Darting to Douglas's side, Alison laid a warning finger against her lips, then, seizing the blanket, ran to the outer room. Pulling off her flannel shirt, she crumpled it into a pillow, then rolled up in the blanket close to the wall just as heavy footsteps crunched outside the door.

Through half-shut eyes she saw Paxton peer into the cell's dim obscurity, but at his first step across the threshold she sat bolt upright. "Who's that?" Her voice rang sharp with alarm.

Started, the man whirled, his weapon leveled at the girl's breast; then slowly the grimace of amazement died away and only a bewildered look remained in his close-set eyes. "It's me—Ed Paxton."

The girl drew the flannel shirt about her. "What do you want here?"

"We're looking for Jack Douglas and Sam Record."

"You don't expect to find them here, do you?" Then as he stood silent and irresolute, "What do you want with them?"

"Just a little friendly conversation, mebbe." His eyes scanned the dust at his feet. "We saw them makin' for this thicket of mesquite."

**ALISON** shook her head. "I heard horses breaking through the brush about an hour ago, but it sounded more like a dozen riders than two."

"Which way were they bound?"

"North."

Paxton glanced back at his companion. "That's where their tracks were leadin'."

"But how do you know it was Jack Douglas and Record?"

"You can't mistake Coronado or that pinto of the ranger's." He stood blinking at her, his slow thoughts grappling with an insoluble situation. "What are you doin' up here, Miss Alison?"

"I came last night to take care of Antonia's little girl."

"You sure choose exclusive sleeping quarters."

"I'm beginning to think they're not half exclusive enough. What time is it?"

He glanced at the sun. "Must be gettin' near eight o'clock."

Dismayed surprise showed on the girl's face. "Eight o'clock! I'll be terribly late. Go over to Antonia's, Ed. She'll have a cup of coffee for us. I'll be after you as soon as I get on my boots."

She caught up with him just outside the Mexican hut, where the blended fragrance of coffee and tortillas was rising from a battered stovepipe. Glancing behind her, Alison saw that Paxton's companion was leading the horses across the clearing, and, seeing her turn, Paxton asked, "Where's your mare, miss?"

"In one of the pastures, I suppose," Alison answered indifferently. "Antonia took her down to water last night."

**AS THEY** entered the room Alison's eyes flashed a warning to the woman inside, and the slightest tightening of Antonia's features told her it had not been missed. She greeted them in hisping border Spanish.

Paxton stamped in. "You seen anything of two riders—one on a big roan and the other on a little pinto pony?"

"No, señor."

Disbelief darkened his face. "Don't lie to me, you she-cat! Their tracks went by less than a hundred yards from here."

Antonia looked toward her sleeping child and her black eyes were defiant. "If the señor must talk so loud, let it be outside. Here there is much sickness."

But the smell of tortillas was in the man's thick nostrils and he grinned at Alison. "All of which reminds me I ain't had a mouthful of breakfast. Suppose we divide them tortillas, Miss Alison."

"I'm only taking coffee." In spite of the compelling need for calm, she could feel her voice grow thin at the thought of this man lingering there. She wanted so desperately to get back to Douglas, to bring aid before it was too late. If only something would make Paxton leave!

Something did, just an instant later. Antonia had sensed the girl's plight. As Paxton reached for the coffeepot a cup of boiling grease slipped from the woman's hand and fell full on his hairy wrist. Howling, he plunged his arm in a bucket of water, then, ripping a towel from the wall, wrapped it about the blistered skin.

"You damned—!" He stopped with an effort, for the child, awakening, had begun to cry weakly, and Alison raised the pinched, trembling form in her arms.

"Don't you think you'd better go now, Ed?" It was almost a command.

He stood for a moment holding his wrist, then angrily he shuffled out. The moment he disappeared in the mesquite Alison hurried back to Douglas.

He was sleeping when she entered, and not until noon did she disturb him to take a little of the broth Antonia had made. But he was in less pain now—the wound had ceased to bleed long since.

Alison sent Antonia to catch her horse; then, leaving the Mexican woman on guard, she rode fast as flying hoofs could take her up the road toward Verde, where Douglas's vaqueros awaited their leader. Twice beyond the fringe of mesquite she saw men sitting their horses, silent and watchful, and she knew that the man-hunt was still on, but they made no attempt to stop her, and an hour later she met Douglas's vaqueros hurrying out from Verde.

Russell was nearly frantic. He had un-



loaded the shipment of pure-bred horses in the early morning and for six hours awaited Douglas's arrival. By noon the suspense had become unbearable. Turning the herd into a pasture, Russell left a few vaqueros to guard them, and with the rest came fast as spurs and quilt could take him back over the valley road. Now at sight of Alison they halted, and in a few words she told them all that had happened.

"So Paxton has joined the raiders, has he? I'm serving notice right now I'll shoot him down next time we meet, if it's on the main street of Verde." Tight-jawed with anger, Russell sent a man back for a doctor, then started for the mission.

Long shadows already shaded the little cell when Alison drew up, to find Antonia, true to her trust, sitting beside the wounded man. She looked up, smiling. "He is much better. No longer does the bullet hurt."

It was true. Douglas was sleeping, his face pale but free from signs of pain.

"Did anyone come?" Alison whispered.

"Yes. Two horsemen rode to the door soon after you were gone, and I told them my little child was ill of the smallpox. They rode away quickly."

HOURS later the doctor came and by the light of a candle removed Alison's bandages. Painstakingly he examined Douglas's shoulder, then dressed the wound.

At last he looked up. "Lucky. Luckier than he deserves. Another inch and that bullet might have cut the big artery." He rose and packed his instruments. "What you need now is rest. Ten days—maybe more."

A sob, sudden and convulsive, burst from Alison, and Douglas saw tears streaming down her face. The knowledge that the danger was passed had snapped her overtaxed endurance. Turning, she ran out into the night.

Antonia nodded. "Tears wash away sorrow. She will be better soon." Then to the doctor, "Señor, I have a child sick with fever. If you will come—"

The physician followed her down the path, and ruefully Douglas looked up at his vaqueros. "Ten days. And how do I get back from here?"

"That's easy," Russell answered. "Tomorrow we'll put you in the padre's buggy and walk every foot of the way. But tonight we're all stayin' right here, and I'm hopin' that Paxton and some of them man-hunters may stray in this direction."

None did, and the next morning a grim-faced band of vaqueros passed at a sedate walk down the long mesquite-covered slope and out across the valley, while Coronado, riderless and resentful, brought up the end of the procession. Douglas himself, stiff and bandage-swathed, sat on the faded seat of the padre's buggy, drawn by a sober, middle-aged mare.

For the next ten days Inés Blasio saw to it that the doctor's orders were carried out to the exact letter. At the end of a week Douglas announced that his recovery was complete, but Inés proved obdurate, and for once both Russell and Record sided with her—he would ride when the doctor gave the word; not before. So, chafing at the enforced inaction, Douglas wandered moodily about the mesa-top, his eyes often rising to where, on the knoll behind the hacienda, that pile of resinous pine and oil-soaked rags awaited the match to summon his desert allies to the last battle.

During those days of convalescence the valley ranchers—all who dared—rode up through the guarded gate to sit for a while with Douglas before the hacienda, offering their sympathy at his misadventure. Sam Record was among the first.

"Since you been shot, those forest guards of mine are gettin' hard to handle," he announced, with a grin. "They seem to disregard we're just the law-abidin' hired help of Uncle Sam and don't take sides in the neighborhood brawls." He filled his pipe. "Looks like I may not be able to keep 'em out of this mix-up when the big explosion comes." And his eyes left little doubt that when the hour struck, at least one forest ranger would be on the firing line.

There were other visitors not quite so welcome. From Verde came old Lucas, the banker. His tale was told in a very few minutes—he could no longer permit his bank to carry the risk of loans already made to Miracle Mesa. Past interest had not been met, notes were overdue. In justice to his directors he must take action before all values were wiped out. In short, he must have money.

Angrily Douglas laughed. "Where would I get money except from you? I cannot move my cattle until the rains come."

The banker shrugged. "In that case—" Almost threateningly Douglas leaned over him. "Do you remember what you said to me once in Verde—if I overthrew the raiders you would let me have whatever money I needed?"

"Yes. And I repeat the offer."

"Good—give me two weeks."

"My dear fellow!"

Violently Douglas's fist struck the desk. "Give me ten days—just ten days, and if I have not driven them from the valley you can take over Miracle Mesa."

"And you?"

"I will make you a present of my services as vaquero."

So Douglas won his brief respite.

PAXTON, meanwhile, had disappeared with the completeness of the raiders themselves. It was just as well, since Russell had ordered his vaqueros to shoot him on sight, and the men of the Neale ranch made no secret of their own eagerness to ride the traitor down. But, during all these days of enforced truce, there was not the least sign of Ed Paxton in foothill or in valley.

Perhaps the last man who saw him was Paul Bodine. He, too, had ridden up the mesa to offer his condolence during the later days of Douglas's convalescence, and the two men smoked quietly outside the patio, while Lola sat between them, her big eyes moving lazily from one to the other.

"The spite of a discharged employee is always an unpredictable thing," Bodine observed, "yet whoever dreamed it would lead Paxton to join the raiders? He came to my house the night you sent him away. I believe he thought that since I belong to your traditional enemies, the copper miners, I would receive him with open arms. I listened to his story, told him I had nothing for him, and now I understand he has left the country."

Douglas made no answer. He was almost certain that Paxton had done nothing of the kind. The man's deep-rooted hatred and his intimate knowledge of Miracle Mesa Ranch rendered him too valuable a



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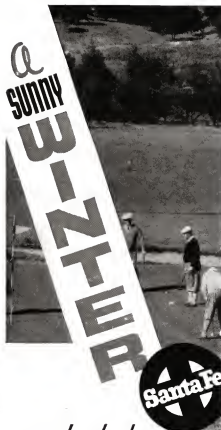
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tool for the raiders to ignore. When at last the artist took his leave Lola walked with him toward the great iron gate, where even in daylight two vaqueros kept constant guard.

But now the gate was swinging open to admit another rider, and Alison Neale dismounted. She waved to Lola, then cut across the lawn to where Douglas sat, while Lola watched her with a little frown. Unconscious of her scrutiny, the girl seated herself on the grass beside Douglas's chair and, pulling off her riding hat, ran both hands through the thick mass of tawny hair.

"Lovely hair," Bodine murmured. The words brought a deeper frown to Lola's face, and the artist added, "They do seem absorbed in each other, those two."

"Is it something you have just noticed?" Pertulantly the girl went on, "If you had seen as much of this as I have, you would realize that it hasn't been too easy for me."

"I have seen for a long time how hard it is for you." The man's voice was gentle. "Do you think, on the other hand, that it's been easy for me since your cousin came back, knowing you two are intended for each other and yet, caring for you as I have—without even the right to tell you?"

Her hand touched his and he felt it tremble. "You have been a wonderful friend—my only friend," she answered, half in tears.

WITH an apparent effort to change the conversation Bodine glanced at the vaqueros by the gate. "So you guard the hacienda night and day now?"

Absently Lola nodded. "You must have a small army here."

"Nearly all of Juan's riders."

"And still no news of the raiders?"

"Nothing yet, but"—Lola's eyes were

still fixed on the couple across the lawn—"Juan may learn something tomorrow."

The peon he found in the morada is almost well, but still terribly afraid. He worships Aunt Inés for saving his life, and he will talk to no one but her. This morning he promised her that if Juan would send him down into Mexico, far away from the raiders, he would tell everything he knew."

Suddenly Lola was conscious that she had said too much. "But I ought not talk about this, even to you, Paul."

"Then let's not. There are many things I would rather talk about, such as the next time you are coming to my studio."

"I don't know when that will be. With all the countryside aflame, Aunt Inés hasn't wanted me to go down from the mesa. And yet"—tears stood in the girl's eyes—"I need help so much, Paul. I'm so terribly unhappy and there's no one I can go to."

"Not even me?"

"Yes, you alone."

"Then I'll come tomorrow."

On a sudden impulse she urged, "Paul, meet me here tonight."

Bodine's eyes raised toward Douglas. "Do you think it safe? You know he doesn't want me to come here so often."

"Meet me tonight." Her low, suppliant voice was almost a caress. "No one will ever have to know." She nodded toward the vaqueros guarding the gate. "I'll see that they're away when you come. Please, Paul—this isn't just a whim. I need you now as I never needed you before. I—I'm not able to cope with this alone. You mustn't fail me."

He no longer hesitated. "I'll be here at the gate tonight at eleven. But if—" A shadow fell between them and, looking up, they saw Lin Foo sitting his burro just behind them. Face ashen with smiles, he took off his broad hat and bowed to them, then, still smiling, rode toward the servants' quarters.

"That Chink gives me the creeps," Bodine's gaze followed him. "I wonder just how long he had been there?" The artist mounted and leaning toward Lola added in a lower tone, "Tonight at eleven."

Lola joined the others when Bodine had gone, seating herself beside them in silence, but Alison, happy at Douglas's swift recovery and unconscious of the ominous tightness about Lola's lips, nodded toward Lin Foo, disappearing about a corner of the hacienda.

"That cook of mine insisted on bringing up a basket of indigestibles for Juan." She smiled up at Douglas. "Not that you need it. Lola's been a marvelous nurse."

An uncomfortable silence followed, and, to break it, Douglas spoke of his impatience to see the pure-blood horses still pastured in Verde and of the news that his cattle were doing well on the grasses of Sonora.

And Alison also rose to go. Lola walked beside her to the gate.

"I think you had better wait until next week, Alison, before you come again." Lola looked away as she spoke. "I want Juan to be kept very quiet. Too many people are seeing him, for his good."

"But you mustn't worry any longer, dear. He's almost well enough to ride."

"Don't you think Aunt Inés and I had better be the judges of that?" Lola's lips were bloodless and, sick at heart, Alison laid both hands on the girl's shoulders.

"What is it, Lola? You're so changed. You act almost as if you hated me." Her low-pitched, earnest voice was pleading now. "Listen, Lola, if it's about Juan you must know that he and I are simply partners in an undertaking—an undertaking terribly important to both of us. You've got to believe me. Let's not allow anything to destroy our friendship. I swear you have nothing to fear from me."

LOLA tried to laugh. "What makes you think I am afraid of you? I'm not. But keep away from Juan. That's all I ask of you." Her voice was strident with unleashed anger. "I always knew you were treacherous and deceitful. I've watched you day after day trying to worm your way into Juan's life. You would like to be mistress of the great Miracle Mesa Rancho, wouldn't you? But you'll never be. Never! You can conspire—"

"Stop!" Alison's voice silenced the words in mid-air. "You've said enough, Lola." Her own eyes were blazing now. "Not even old friendship gives you the right to speak as you have."

"Then say you don't love Juan. Say it. Let me hear you."

Pale and with eyes aflame, the two girls faced each other, while slowly Alison's lips parted. She made as if to speak, but no sound came, and suddenly she was aware of the blood surging to her cheeks. For a second she stood there, silent; then with a little gesture she mounted and spurred toward the gate. Lola stood looking after her, tearing to shreds the small lace handkerchief she held.

"You'll never have him," she whispered

once, and a spasm of trembling seized her. "Never, never."

Her eyes turned to the desert, where in the middle distance she caught sight of Bodine glancing toward the sunset, and the thought of having him for counselor and ally calmed her. . . .

The night was a night of restless winds and scudding clouds that half concealed a full moon rising over the desert. It was already high when a rider tethered his horse just beyond the bend in the road below the hacienda and moved noiselessly to where the great iron gate loomed. There Bodine halted—almost eleven. He listened. No sign of a vaquero. Something white glimmered beyond the gate, and Lola ran to his side, expectant but half afraid.

Bodine took her hand. "The guards?" "I told them two of the horses had broken into Aunt Inés's garden. The vaqueros are looking for them now." Eagerly she pulled him through the narrowly opened gate. "But they may be back any minute. We'd better go nearer the house."

In silence he slipped his arm through hers and they moved toward the hacienda. She was frightened no longer now. The thrill and excitement of this clandestine meeting, the knowledge that Bodine was here by her side, brought a sense of almost physical release. All lights were out in the hacienda and farther to the left the white walls of the servants' quarters shone like vapor beneath the moon. Uneasily Bodine looked about him; he was about to speak when in sudden alarm the girl grasped his arm.

"Paul, there's someone behind us. I—"

Out of the darkness a hairy hand swept to her mouth, and without a sound she was pulled back into the deep shadow of the trees. Instantly Bodine was at her side but, as he reached her, Lola heard the dull impact of a blow and, numb with terror, she saw Bodine fall limply at her feet. Wildly she reached up to tear away that suffocating hand, but her head was jerked back, a handkerchief fastened over her face and knotted about her neck.

Aroused at last, she was fighting like a wildcat now, but her hands were pinned roughly behind her. As through a thickening mist she saw Bodine's outstretched form on the ground, then, worn out and cold with fright, she could fight no more. Her head sank forward, and suddenly she went limp in her assailant's arms.

SHE felt herself raised and carried down the walk—an interval of blackness, a sound of something heavy falling, then she was conscious of lying upon a hard board floor. Sobbing with terror, she crawled to where the crack of dim light indicated a closed door and raised her hands to the latch, but it was fastened on the outside. They had locked her in one of the servant's quarters. She pulled the handkerchief from her face and took a step toward the window. Her foot struck a soft object on the floor. Weakly she swerved forward, to see outlined in the moonlight the peon they had brought from the morada, lying face upward on the floor. Reeling, Lola sank down beside him, her hands reached forward; then with a scream she recoiled—her fingers were wet with blood.

Piercingly again she screamed. She knew now that the Killer was abroad. Half crazed with terror, she rushed to the

window. A wooden stool lay in her path and, seizing it, she crashed the window with all her might; then, heedless of broken glass, pushed her way through the shattered frame. Leaping the low hedge, she ran toward the hacienda.

The door to the patio was open—the Killer had gone that way. Again she cried out, heedless of fear for herself now.

Already her screams were having their effect. The vaqueros' quarters gleamed with light; men were calling and hurrying footsteps were crossing the lawn outside.

Racing through the patio, Lola gained the stairs and sped down the hall toward Douglas's room. "Juan! Don't come out!" Shrieking her warning, the girl caught sight of a crouching figure just above her, caught the gleam of his revolver, and, springing forward, twined both arms about him, then clung to him with all her strength. She felt hands ripping at her arms, felt the hot breath of the Killer on her face—if only she could hold on!

Downstairs the shouts had redoubled, and an opening door told that Douglas was already in the corridor. Tighter still she clung. Another moment and the vaqueros would be on the stairs. Again she felt the man's arms tearing at her, but she clung the tighter. Only a second more.

A crash. A burning, stinging pain in her side. Limply her arms relaxed, a sob choked back into silence, and a white form wavered downward to the floor.

**B**ENDING low, a man's dark figure rushed blindly down the stairs and into the patio. Already lights were flashing about him, and he crouched back among the palms until the last vaquero had passed him, then like a ghost he crept out into the night.

Back within the hacienda Jack Douglas knelt in stricken silence beside Lola. He raised her head and smoothed back the clustering blue-black hair. Feebly the eyelids moved, her eyes fluttered open.

"Lola, Lola, who was it?" His voice was a tortured whisper.

"Juan, dear—they would have killed you. They killed Paul."

He lowered his face close to hers. "Tell me who did it, Lola," he entreated.

"Juan, I loved you. Remember—"

"Lola, Lola, who was it?" Despairingly he raised the small, tired head, watching her lips, listening for the faintest word—but all words had ceased. The head had suddenly grown heavy in his arms. Douglas closed her eyes.

Minutes passed. About him in silence his vaqueros stood, guns in hand, watching their leader kneeling by his dead. Then very slowly Douglas rose and lifted the girl's body in his arms.

Inés Blasio moved at the head of the stairs.

"She is dead?" the quiet voice asked.

"Yes, my aunt."

Douglas passed down the hall to the girl's room. The door was open; a low light was burning before the little shrine of the Blessed Virgin, and, still clasping that frail figure in his arms, he looked up at the calm, compassionate face of the statue.

"Mother of God," he took his solemn oath, "not while I live will there be any turning aside until I find who killed her."

Minutes later the vaqueros found Paul Bodine lying beside the path. The little man was conscious, but his face was white

## Apply the doctor's standards to your laxative



**Y**OUR doctor is a guardian of health. He knows that many things that seem unimportant to you may be vital to your well-being.

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It should be mild and gentle.

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and a heavy welt discolored his forehead. Quickly they carried him to the bunkhouse, where Russell questioned him closely.

But Bodine's information was of little help. There had been two men—the one who seized Lola; the other, who struck him. He had seen neither of them clearly.

Russell frowned. "Why were you here at all—and how did you get by the guards?"

"Lola asked me to meet her here."

"Why?"

"I don't know."

Angrily Russell swore. "If two of them could get by the gate, why didn't they bring the whole band?"

"I think I can answer that," Bodine replied. "It was a job for one or two men, not for a dozen."

"And that job was—?"

"To murder Jack Douglas in his bed."

Russell was suddenly intent. "Who else knew you were coming tonight?"

"Not a—" Bodine hesitated. "Alison Neale's cook may have heard us talking. Lola had just told me something about the peon promising information."

But Russell had already dashed out toward the servants' quarters, and his own face was white with rage when again he faced his vaqueros. "They got him, too. Right into our own hacienda they come, and they got him, and Lola, too."

"Lola!" Bodine dragged himself to his feet. "Is Lola—?"

Quietly Russell answered, "Lola is dead."

Bodine made as if to speak, but no words came. His frail body seemed to shrink, and without a sound he walked blindly out.

(To Be Continued)

## Among those PRESENT

(Continued from page 39)

rubber cornucopia. She held it for a minute in her hand. "I haven't, really," she said. "I was just going to a movie."

"Then," he said, "we have a date. We'll be going somewhere at eight o'clock." He took an address book from his pocket. "Tell me where you live."

She told him. The second house from the corner, a gray one on the right, where Sea Street crossed Pine.

"I'll be calling for you on the dot. Don't," he said, "forget. Can I drop you somewhere? I have to do some errands."

She had some errands. Dora told him, to do too. It would be better if she walked. She watched him, tall and handsome, going out the drugstore door.

There was only one year-round dry-goods store that carried a millinery and dress line anywhere near approximating the ones shown in the summer specialty shops. Dora tried on several hats before the saleswoman brought out the tam-o'-shanter from a drawer. It was white suede with embroidery on it and crushed down at the side, and was unmistakably becoming. "It suits you to a T, Dora," Miss Thole said. . . .

**YOU** went to the first show at the Isis when you had a Saturday night date. Suppers were over a little after six and you had a whole hour to dress. Not that you needed it. To change into a newly washed and stretched sweater suit or press out a silk, and then decide between link bracelets or beads and comb your hair freshly, never took long.

Dora hurried through supper and went upstairs whistling to the supper radio music without stopping for dessert.

She was wearing the dotted swiss that she had made from a fashion-sheet pattern. It had come out exactly like the pattern illustration. She dusted her face with powder and faint little disks of pink. Her cheeks looked brighter than the rouge cake in the box. She rubbed the pink off, but in the mirror they still bloomed brightly with excitement.

She put the tam-o'-shanter on and inspected it from all sides. It was lovely, the loveliest hat she had ever had. A clock on the dresser pointed to ten minutes of eight. She ran across the room to the wardrobe and took out her last year's white flannel coat. There was a perfume bottle on the bureau. She touched the stopper lightly to the tips of her ears.

**A**CAR stopped abruptly in front of the house. She heard a door clapped shut and footsteps treading briskly on the walk. She caught up the white flannel coat and belted it about her with hasty fingers. The doorbell pealed. She took a last look at the mirror and went down the stairs. The front door was open, and Brandy was standing beyond the screened panel.

"Hello, there, Miss Dora Baxter," he said. "You look marvelous. Are you all ready? We have a lot of things to do this evening."

They went down the walk to where the long roadster lay nosed against the curb. Dora settled in the wide, low seat. Brandy started the motor.

"I've made plans for a swing around Clarksport," he said. "You're to show me 'all the sights.'"

"You know them," Dora smiled across the space between them. "You've been here lots of seasons. There are just the same places. Except"—she ticked it off on a finger—"for a hamburger diner that started up this spring."

"We'll take them all in," he stated, "complete with hamburger diner. The first number on the program is the Isis. How does that," he questioned, maneuvering the car skillfully through the Saturday night traffic, "suit you?"

"It sounds perfect. I've never done all the places on one Saturday night. It'll be fun," she declared.

He glided the roadster into a gap among

the cars before the Isis. They went in, down the dark aisle, toward seats in the front. It was a Western first and a musical comedy. They talked in smothered whispers through the musical comedy. Brandy had seen it and he said before the end: "Cut. What do you say we duck out of here, and go on with the rest of the program?" They slipped back up the aisle and climbed into the roadster.

"Let's spin out toward the shore," he said. They passed the last of the Clarkspoor houses and swung down the winding ribbon of macadam where the colony residences lay. They came to an open stretch where the beach spread wide and blanchied in the June moonlight below.

"We stop here," Brandy said. "That's next on the program. I want to hear about you. What do you do, where have you been, all these Clarkspoor years?"

"Nowhere but here," Dora laughed. "Just straight, native"—her blue eyes slanted merrily at him under the tam—"Clarkspoor stock."

"No," he insisted; "I want to know. You work on the what do you call it? Weekly. What do you do?"

SHE told him: About the column. Gathering notes about people who were visiting out of town. Covering lodge parties and church suppers. Listing the activities of the inns and hotels and colony.

"What do you do, besides work on the paper in the winter?" he asked. "I've never been here except in the summer. Isn't it sort of—dead?"

"Dead?" said Dora. She weighed it for an instant. You couldn't apply that word to it. It was quiet, of course, not the same town that it was during the vacation months. But there were always small events that occupied the time. The annual New Year's Eve party at the armory, and coasting in a crowd down Bluff Slope after a snowfall, and the Cap and Bells that held potluck suppers, in turn, at the members' homes. She described some of it to him.

He listened, his eyes interested. "That sounds like fun," he said. "I've been skipping a few pages, it's just occurred to me. See here"—his teeth made a white part across his brown face—"I'm going to see a lot of you from now on."

Dora looked at the moon, full in the sky. The glow from it felt like a silver-bright wrap around her heart.

Brandy poked the roadster into throbbing motion. "We're going back to take in the town. Roby's, and all the one-way streets the wrong and right way—and the hamburger diner."

She left him on the steps of her porch. It was late and his car, going up the street, made a soft, rocketing sound that echoed on the macadam. "Remember," he had said, "the night after next." She skipped up the stairs, two at a time, her eyes shiny. She put the tam carefully away on the wardrobe shelf. She must take care of it, because there was all of summer ahead. . . .

Overnight, it seemed, there was the other Clarkspoor: The streets that were filled with cars. The women with dogs on leashes and children warded by starch-clad nursemaids. The white boats bobbing at anchor in the bay.

The Weekly office was full of stir and hustle. Dora didn't go home for lunch, as she did between seasons. It took too long,



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and there were luncheons at the golf club with guest lists to obtain and decorations to note. Brandy had driven her to the first of them, and after that it was a custom. It was fun, he said, more fun than a picnic. He kept a packet of paper stuffed in his pocket and jotted names on it, and said, "I've got Mrs. Cartwright's center name down in black and white, and it's Jospot. Two o's, or she'll be in to see you. How did you get along without me?"

He phoned her at the office almost every morning. "There's a swim at the beach this afternoon, Dora," he would say. "Tell Mr. What's-his-Name with the eyeshade it's the top note of the week."

Pop Sligh would glance over, above a batch of proofs. "Young Colson again? Guess we'll have to put him on the staff, Dora."

Those were the parties she used to call up about. Asking hasty young voices for the names she would list "Among those present." The parties Pop Sligh used to lend her his rattling coupe, sometimes, to cover. The places Brandy took her to now in the fast, lean roadster with the top down.

She learned that auburn-haired Conny Ellis was called "Cocoo" by her friends. She learned that Forrest Craigie had roomed with Brandy at college last fall and was taking a suite with him and someone referred to as "the Skipper" next term.

They were nice to her. They took it for granted, they said, that she would come with Brandy without waiting to be asked. The girls wanted to know which was the best place in town to have their hair done and told her that her hand-knitted sweaters were prettier than theirs. They read her column in the paper and said, "It's much more fun, now we know who's doing it."

The dances were always at the liveliest around midnight. She would have to go then, with Forrest and Gordon Parr and a cluster of the others in mess jackets, assuring her that when she left the party would be over. She had to be in early at the office the next morning, with the hotel clerks to call, and the Personal Mention items, which continued now from one page in the Weekly to another.

The orchestra music would tag the black roadster gaily down the driveway and too soon they would be in front of the house on Sea Street. "Be ringing you tomorrow, sure," Brandy would call, starting the roadster back toward the party, and Dora would loiter up the walk, listening to the sound of the swift wheels fading in the distance. Brandy was like no one she had ever known. He made everyone—a lot of them in the colony, even—seem a little slow and more ordinary.

ROY had been transferred to steady night patrol and the only evening off he had was Sunday. There was never any place in particular to go on Sunday evening except Two Mile Beach. They would come home late in his motorcycle, with slacks over their damp bathing suits, and sit for a while on Dora's front porch.

"I hear that Brandy Colson's been taking up your time," he said once kiddingly. "How does it feel to be out in a real car for a change, Dee?"

"Nice," Dora said. "It can do eighty." "Take care," Roy said, "he doesn't run you into any trees."

The office would be hot at noontime,

with the smell of ink clotting the air. Dora would slip her purse, if there were no luncheons scheduled, under her arm and go down bareheaded to the diner. You could have iced coffee and a sandwich there quickly, and Brandy would be waiting, idly smoking a large-bowled pipe.

He said, one noon, drinking his coffee leisurely, "I just had a card from Jinny—Virginia Tammer. She's getting back from Europe. Due at Point Breeze in a day or so. It's one for the book, Dora."

"I'll put it down on the typewriter," Dora said, "this afternoon. Thanks, Brandy."

She tapped it off on a yellow rectangle of copy paper:

Miss Virginia Tammer is returning from Europe in a few days to join her parents at Point Breeze Cottage on Shoreline Road.

ROY swung by early Sunday evening on his motorcycle. He left it beside the curb on its standard and came up the walk in his leather puttees dusty from the road. "I'm running into bad luck, Dee," he said. "The bathing beach traffic was heavy all day, and Parker's down there straightening things out. I have to take his relief tonight. We can go somewhere tomorrow. The crowd," he said, "is planning on Two Mile."

Dora shook her head. "I can't, Roy," she said. "I have a date with Brandy Colson tomorrow."

Roy drew off a gauntlet and balanced it in his hand. "I haven't seen so much of you this summer, Dee. Couldn't you fix it up some way? Call him up and tell him how it is?"

"It's a dance in the Venetian Room at the Surf Inn," Dora explained. "They—Brandy and Forrest and Cocoo Ellis—planned it a week ago."

He jammed his hand back in the glove. "Okay," he said. "So long."

He pounded off down the street, his broad shoulders curved over the handle bars, his mouth set in a straight line. The dark tape of Shoreline Road spread out beyond the harbor, stabbed with head-lights. He paced along it, checking his speedometer with the touring cars and station wagons rolling by. A roadster honked and rushed past, its taillight a speeding ember. He shortened the distance between it and drew alongside.

The girl at the wheel pulled over to the side and switched off the motor. Her hair was a disheveled auburn halo in the glare of the lights. She reached in a car pocket for a license and handed it to him.

He didn't look at it. He knew who she was.

"Constance Ellis." He tipped his cap, and smiled a little. "You seem to be in a hurry to get somewhere."

"Hello," she said. "You're—Roy Lane, aren't you?" She regarded him blithely. "I think we've met, somewhere along here, before."

"Last year," he recollected, "near Point Breeze."

"And the year before, near the Chimneys. Why don't I," she asked—her eyes swept upward, mischievously—"ever see you other times?" . . .

When Dora came home from work now she found messages only once in a while from someone in the old crowd. She met them infrequently on the street, to exchange a few words about acquaintances



and season conditions. It was Nell Davis who told her about Roy. Dora ran into her on Front Street on her way back to the office one noon. "Guess who we saw out in Roy's sidecar," Nell said. "Conny Ellis."

Dora continued, a little thoughtfully, up the street to the office. Roy hadn't come for two Sundays. He hadn't called or stopped by on his motorcycle. He was with Cocoa Ellis on a free afternoon.

Brandy rang her up not quite so often at the *Weekly* now, because "the Skipper" was visiting him, and the roadster stopped in front of the house at night only briefly. He signaled "ta-dah" on the horn and didn't get out, for there would be something on. "Something colony. Nothing special for the notebook. If there is"—his hazel eyes would twinkle—"I'll be on the phone first thing tomorrow." When he sped off, the night would feel vacant.

He came charging down Pine Street one afternoon when Dora was walking home from work. "Howdy!" he hailed. "Great doings at the Chimneys on Labor Day. I'll run you home and tell you about them."

There was going to be a dance, South Sea, with everyone in costume. And an orchestra flying down from Boston and a dancing platform constructed on the lawn.

"You've got to come, of course," he said. "You'll look swell in something South Sea."

She slipped down to the library the next noon and leafed over an illustrated travel book and hurried, after work, to Frederick's Bazaar. There was a sale of cotton prints, and there were any number of accessories to choose from at the closing-out specialty shops. She sat up, stitching the costume by hand that very night, and slipped it on, eagerly inspecting the finished effect in the mirror. It had an air, she thought, a lovely, exotic air. There were two fabric flowers for her hair and bangles for her wrists. It seemed beautifully right for a party at Brandy's. She could scarcely wait to wear it. . . .

IT WAS cloudless and clear on Labor Day and a full moon rose high in the sky after supper. Dora was dressed before eight. She sat in a hammock on the porch waiting. When the roadster finally halted out front she ran across the porch breathlessly.

"Sorry," Brandy said, "about the time. Forgive." His hair was tousled, with a bandanna set crookedly over it, and he wore tattered ducks. "I'm a castaway." His face was as brown as saddle leather and his smile curved widely across it. "Beautiful," he said, "you'll win a prize."

The car sped down the moon-washed road toward White Chimneys. People were already dancing on the platform.

There was Gordon Parr, with barbaric hoops hanging from his ears, whirling in fast circles with the Southern girl who was the house guest of the Deanes. And the Skipper as a mutineer, dancing with Virginia Tammer, in a batik skirt with a lei of camellias.

"We got under way early," Brandy said. "Jinny had a little party first. I'll tell you," he promised, "about it later."

She danced with Forrest and Gordon, and the Skipper taught her rumba steps in a corner. Brandy and Virginia did all the rumbas together. Virginia danced it perfectly—slow and gracefully, with her head tilted back and her sandaled feet showing tinted nails under her batiked

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skirt. It was the liveliest, the most shiniest gay dance of the season.

Dora went into the house, during an intermission, to tuck back the fabric flowers in her hair. The girls were powdering their noses before the dressing-room mirrors and retouching their soft, stained mouths. Virginia Tammer was flaking powder on her face and Cocoa Ellis was sitting before a vanity, running a comb through a blown, ruffled permanent.

"Show me your ring, Jinny," Cocoa said. "I didn't see it at the announcement party this afternoon. Brandy always has such elegant taste." A jewel, large and frosty, glinted on Virginia's tanned left hand.

DORA pinned the flowers fumblingly back in her hair. She walked a little unsteadily on her new slippers out toward the porch. There was a funny numbness in her heart.

Brandy was hurrying up the steps. "I've been looking for you," he said. "I'm going to take the roadster and duck out for a minute."

"I have to go home," Dora said. "It's late. I have to be at the office early tomorrow."

"You can come for just a minute," he urged. "I've been saving something up to tell you. We'll run down the shore and I'll drive you home afterward." He piloted her toward the roadster.

Dora sat back in a corner of the seat. The wind cut across the bent windshield and burned her flushed cheeks. There was chill in the air and matted, fallen leaves sprayed the hood.

"Jinny," Brandy said, "announced her engagement to me this afternoon." He swerved, and turned the roadster down a sandy strip above the beach. "I've known her just about all my life and the families sort of expected it." The car flashed along the narrow road. "The wedding's a long way off and it may not come to a thing. I want to tell you," he said, "about you."

"No," Dora said. She didn't want to hear what he might say. It was cold and it wasn't like summer any more.

"It's pretty special," he smiled; "like you. I've never met anyone"—his eyes laughed across the wheel—"quite like you. Tell me"—the car turned and swayed on the windings of the road—"you like me a little."

She didn't. He was someone strange and unfamiliar. He wasn't like anyone she knew. She didn't like to be riding fast with him down a shore road, away from town. No one in Clarksport ever drove fast down the sand shore roads, not even Roy when he was on duty. She wanted to be with Roy now, in the snug, small seat behind the celluloid windbreaker. But Cocoa Ellis had been riding in it.

"I have to go home," she said. Her voice sounded blurred and thin in her ears. "Please slow down and go home."

"Not," his eyes were reckless and gay, "until you say you like me a little. I'll be coming back next year." The wheels of the roadster spun on the road.

"Look out!" Dora screamed. "Brandy!"

The car swung and plunged, with a shattering, grinding crash, down and over into the deep, wide ditch rimming the sandy road. Dora extricated herself from the re-

mains of the front seat while Brandy was edging himself from under the bent wheel. A motorcycle, with a roaring, chopping pant, was racing down the sandy stretch.

Roy Lane jarred to a quick stop beside him. He strode to the side of the road. "You all right, Dee?" he asked hoarsely. "Hurt?"

She shook her head. "No." The small bruises on her arms didn't matter.

"How about you?" he said tersely to Brandy. "Cut up any?"

"Nothing," Brandy said, "for the doctor." He smiled uncertainly. "Pinch?" he inquired.

"Not this time," Roy said. "Next, I've been tailing you from the Shoreline." He threw a brief glance at the roadster. "I'll send for a wrecking car. They ought to be around in a few minutes." He walked back to the motorcycle.

"Wait," Dora Baxter said. She ran swiftly, breathlessly, over to the little tub sidecar. "I'm going with you."

They jolted back down the sandy road. You could smell wild grapevines and hear the insects droning in the trees. She looked over at Roy, at his broad, steady shoulders curved over the handle bars.

"I heard that Cocoa Ellis," she said, "has been going with you. Do—do you like her?"

"Cocoa?" he said. "She's all right. Nice"—he smiled down at her from his jiggling seat—"for a summer girl, I missed you, Dee. You seemed pretty interested in Brandy Colson."

She nestled her chin in the blue weave of his jacket. "He was nice too, but different. Not like you. Nice"—she recollected it a little distantly—"for a summer boy."

The glowworm lights of the Clarksport houses came in view—trim, neat homes in close rows on the streets.

"Look, Dee," Roy said. "I'm going to be graduating from Tech next year. Don't you think that we could start looking around for a ring with a diamond and a house with one or two trees, in Clarksport, soon?"

"I think that we could," Dora said. Her voice was softly positive and happy. "Quite soon." She reached up a hand and locked it tightly, warmly over one of his gauntleted ones on the handle bars. . . .

DORA walked down Bluff Slope the next morning, toward town. The air was cool under the sun, with a tangy, new crispness. A station wagon loaded with trunks and luggage was standing before the curb of Cottage Lookout. The wagons marked "BEACHSIDE" and "GREEN ACRES" would be rolling away soon, and Front Street would be uncluttered and leisurely. Mrs. Mudrock's "TOURISTS ACCOMMODATED" sign was down from her laced parlor window.

Dora went up the stairs of the Weekly. She slipped a sheet of paper in the typewriter.

The engagement of Miss Virginia Tammer, of Point Breeze Cottage, to Mr. Brandywine Colson, Junior, of White Chimneys, has been announced.

Miss Dora Baxter, of Sea Street, has made known her engagement to Mr. Roy Lane, resident of Clarksport. We bid farewell to our summer visitors [she wrote]. Clarksport had a good season this year.

## SECOND CHOICE

(Continued from page 17)

meaning to living, if he did not love her.

She set about a mental process she called "getting hold of myself." The past was irretrievable. The present was, usually, difficult enough to handle. There was, for instance, Anne. If Anne were really taking Owen Nash seriously she, Lavinia, should find out more about him, since she stood in the position of Anne's mother. To be sure, she had known and liked Owen's parents when they were very settled elderly people and she was just newly married. But she had not met the son then. It was so important that Anne should make no mistake, should be completely happy.

Then, too, there was young Dr. Knowlton, who adored Anne, even though she had no eyes for anyone but Owen.

She remembered suddenly that she had asked Anne to call for Dr. Knowlton on the way home. . . .

ANNE was now sitting between Owen and Dr. Knowlton, thankful that the two men kept up some sort of conversation. Even if it was disagreeable enough! Consciousness of their antagonism spoiled very slightly her own high happiness. It was odd that those two had developed such an immediate dislike for each other at first meeting, a dislike which clearly had persisted through all three occasions when they'd been at Riverview. Oh, on a day perfect as this day, in a world perfect as this world, no one should dislike anyone. Or perhaps she only felt that was so because she was so completely in love.

If she did as Owen wished she would be his and he hers forever, at this time tomorrow. And—she was pretty surely going to do as he wished. She was about done with hesitations, based on her desire not to displease Emory, her guardian, or Lavinia, who had always been so kind. She hoped they would not be hurt.

Dr. Knowlton and Owen, she thought, had been bound to dislike each other, since they were so unlike. Owen so quick, so effortless, so graceful in everything he did and said; the young doctor nice, but so steady and solemn.

She watched the green woods flash by as the car moved fast between them, and remembered, irrelevantly, her first Princeton house party.

How young she'd been! How young she'd always been, content to be just popular, to be asked here and there to college house parties and football games, until this springtime, when she had her twenty-first birthday and that very week, as if now she were of an age for it, had met Owen, who was a man, not an undergradu-

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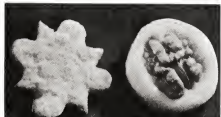


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ate. Handsome, of excellent family, without money (but what did that matter nowadays?), he had traveled all over the world, hunted big game, flown hazardedly, acquired an air of having seen dangerous things, done brave things, so many he felt it scarcely worth while to mention any of them.

But there was more than that behind her immediate response to Owen Nash, when meeting him became the climax of a long-planned visit to a school friend then just "out" in New York. She had never met anyone so certain that life was meant to be amusing. He laughed, even, at his own debts. If she interpreted that laughter as brave, the error was natural to one who had never had any debts. Her heart went out to him for being poor and so courageous about it. No one so splendid should be poor, when she, who was just ordinary, who had never done anything notable in her life, had plenty of money.

That heart of hers, generous as it was inexperienced, was in her blue eyes as she watched him.

And unregarded beside her, watching the lovely curve of her cheek turned away from him, Lawrence Knowlton thought, "She is a darling, a darling."

While Owen Nash thought of the road before him, and just a little of his own astounding luck in meeting this particular girl when he was too uncomfortably near the end of his rope. Well, it was time his luck changed. If he had tried to marry money for five years now since his own was gone, and had failed, still it was usually necessary to marry money only once.

And when luck changed, how thoroughly. That the Welles, who could have been social as they liked, oddly preferred to spend most of the year in the Berkshires, was eccentric of them, but a good thing for him. They had never heard any one of the half-dozen stories around New York which barred him from most homes of marriageable debutantes.

But—Emory Wells was cautious. Owen understood the type well enough to realize that. At first discussion of a formal engagement all sorts of investigations would be commenced. So, marry her—and let the questioning take place afterward.

ON THAT Long Island visit now just completed he had brought her to the verge of believing that her people's objections to their marriage (which he maintained would be based altogether on his frankly admitted lack of money) would be insuperable, unless they ignored them altogether, with forgiveness afterward as the best and simplest solution.

As to the forgiveness afterward he was fairly certain, but it did not matter. She had money in her own right. So lucky to remember—when he heard the name "Anne Wells"—and heard the girl speak of her uncle and aunt Emory and Lavinia—a piece of information from as long ago as his dinner he was barred from his father's front table: "Lavinia and Emory will bring up Anne." That was in the gentle voice of his mother. His father's voice answered her: "The child will have at least a million in her own right."

Anne told him, as quickly she told him everything there was to tell about her life, that, besides visiting New York to have gaiety, she was studying bookkeeping at a business school because her uncle Emory

wanted her to know how to manage her own affairs, now that, with her twenty-first birthday, she had affairs of her own to manage.

Odd, how imple the road was to the confidence of a girl whose confidence no one had ever damaged. Anne had been protected from knowledge that anyone could possibly want her for any reason other than her pretty self. It had been just a little more difficult than he had hoped to prevent her from taking her aunt and uncle into her confidence. She'd been stubborn about maintaining, "I can make them understand. They don't want me to marry money. They just want me to be happy." How fortunately he had repeated that his knowledge of the world was more than hers, that, if she loved him, she would trust that judgment.

And, at that challenge to her love, she had yielded, to the point at least of saying, "Just give me another day to think. We'll go to Riverview. I'll do what you want, probably. Because you love me and so wouldn't want to have me do anything that would not make me happy."

He thought, "Love her! She's a child, a pretty child, fortunately—I should hate to marry an ugly woman—but if I've ever loved anyone, it was Delphine."

Yes, and he trusted Delphine, too, else he would not have written her that letter which obviated the necessity of telling her his plans and having a scene.

THE drive across the state border and south to Harrison would take about four hours. He had better suggest, at dinner, driving somewhere to dance and then leave immediately after dinner.

He turned the car into the long driveway at Riverview. When they reached the wide-open door Lavinia Wells was coming down the curving stairs of the hall.

She greeted Anne delightedly and herself with rather less cordiality than she accorded to Dr. Knowlton. He noticed that immediately, and wrongly suspected, "Her husband and she have decided 'thumbs down,' apparently. Perhaps he's heard something about Delphine." He must manage five minutes with Anne before dinner. He said to his hostess, "So good of you to have me here, Mrs. Wells."

Lavinia thought, looking at him, "He has one of the handsomest faces I ever saw, but somehow like a mask."

He and Anne were going up the stairs side by side to dress for dinner, Anne looking especially small and slight beside Owen Nash's height and breadth of shoulder. Lavinia took Dr. Knowlton out to the terrace above the gardens.

She talked to him easily about the profession of medicine, let him tell her stories of his father, who'd been a well-known New York surgeon. She was sufficiently interested, the more so that their own old family physician, Dr. Perkins, now retired, had a great admiration for Lawrence Knowlton. "The most promising interne the hospital has had in years," he said. "Great pity he had to give up postgraduate when his mother lost her money, and take a country practice. Still, there aren't too many first-rate country practitioners in the East, nowadays. He'll learn a great deal and go on to something bigger."

That conversation was one of several a year ago, when Dr. Perkins had advised the young man to take his own old "sum-



mer practice" in the town nearest River-view, and had asked Lavinia to "Enter-tain him a bit. He'll be lonely, until he's b'usy with the country people's babies."

The butler interrupted them with a message when he brought cocktails: "John's telephoned from the station, ma'am, that Mr. Wells wasn't on the first train, so he waited another, and he wasn't on that, either."

"Do you know how soon the next train is due, Martin?" Lavinia asked.

"In something less than an hour, ma'am." And the drive from the station was a full half-hour. Dinner would have to be late. She said, "Call John at the station and tell him he may as well wait, but to call back if Mr. Wells is not on the next train."

SHE asked Dr. Knowlton whether it mat-tered if his dinner were delayed, whether he had any evening office appointments.

"Not tonight. I'm still so far from being a busy doctor. But my practice is improv-ing, steadily." Lawrence Knowlton added, "I've no complaint, except that I'm not—or I used not to be—very patient."

"It is such a middle-aged virtue. I don't think Anne has a scrap of it, for in-stance."

His face lighted, he was so pleased to talk about her. No good would come of that feeling of his, since it was so clearly not reciprocated. Still, let him talk of her. If there was no good, there was surely no harm in it, either.

"She's a long time dressing. I suppose she was tired after driving and wanted a few minutes to lie down. Though Anne is seldom tired." Thinking of Anne, she thought of Owen, and found herself desir-ing an opinion of him from a contemporary of his. She said, "How do you like that young man of hers?"

"Is he her young man? I suppose so," regretfully.

"I hope not, too." She corrected her-self quickly: "I don't mean that I've the least thing against him, but I do hate to see Anne hurrying into seriousness about anyone."

Something in her voice puzzled him. Surely her own marriage was happy. It had always seemed so. His admiration, his great liking for her, paused an instant over something a little hidden, mysterious, in her still grace and quiet voice.

"You didn't answer my question, about whether you like Owen Nash."

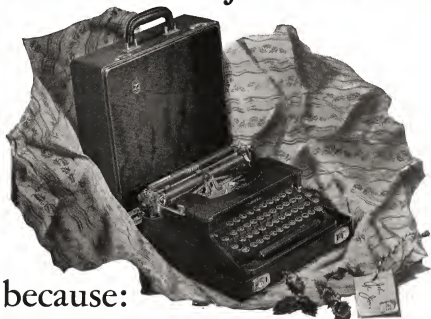
"I dislike him acutely." He was rueful about it. "And don't think I have any justification. But he too clearly represents the idle young man with enough money not to have to worry."

It was a frank speech from that quiet young man, but Lavinia knew he made it as much in answer to some question in his own mind as to her question. He sat silent, looking out over the gardens then, his face controlled as her own. A "nice" face, very amiable, and with strength about the eyes and chin.

She thought, not for the first time, but for the first time when regarding Lawrence Knowlton, "A pity Emory and I never had children. It would have been so pleas-ant to have a son."

Dr. Knowlton interrupted her thoughts: "You may as well know—or probably you do know and were asking me what I thought about Nash for a confirmation—

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the real reason I dislike him is that Anne looks at him as if she thought he were wonderful. And I've been mad about her, since that first evening you had me to dinner. Ridiculous, isn't it?"

She said simply, "I did guess. But truly I was not probing."

The butler interrupted again by coming out to say that he had taken a telegram by phone from Mr. Wells, who was arriving by the third train, and was bringing a guest for dinner and overnight.

"He didn't say who the guest was, Martin?" He so seldom brought anyone home unexpectedly that she wondered.

"No, madam, he did not."

"Very well, then; fresh cocktails when they come and dinner about twenty minutes after that."

She turned back to Lawrence, but he had grown suddenly inattentive. She turned her head. The reason for his inattentiveness was arriving on the terrace, in a white frock with no color about it—and none needed—but the blue sheen of her own dark hair, her eyes shining, and the pink of her glowing cheeks. Lavinia thought she had never seen Anne quite so radiant. Most certainly she and that young man had some sort of "understanding." The very assurance of his manner, walking out onto the terrace behind her, showed that as plainly as Anne's ardent face.

She must make an occasion to speak to Anne immediately after dinner, to tell her to wait, to let Emory make sure the background for her happiness was right, before she yielded to it and got hurt. In short, to tell her to be cautious and worldly and sensible, as she, Lavinia, had not been at one and twenty. . . .

IN THE upstairs hall Owen had waited a long time for Anne.

In her room, though she bathed and dressed quickly, she still hesitated, knowing now that in minutes she must give her final answer. Newly and for the first time in her life in love, she only wanted to prove how much she loved and how confidently. Not everyone had such confidence in Owen. The school friend at whose house she met him had said warningly, "Mother thought I should mention to you that we don't really think him quite—quite the right sort."

He had been honest with her. "Of course, you'll hear that I wasn't very steady when I was as young as you are. I needed someone like you then."

He needed her now. He admitted that he was lonely, that he did not have many friends, because he had been in the Far East so long. Well, she would make all her friends his!

She went out into the hall at last and found Owen waiting. His mouth was warm against hers. Breathless from that kiss, she heard him ask, in a husky voice, as if he too were almost too greatly stirred to be able to manage words, "Will you come with me?"

She wondered only why she had made him wait so long for her answer, and said, "Yes," simply. She listened carefully to his explanations about plans: Toward the end of dinner she was to say, "Let's go somewhere to dance, Owen." Owen would say, "Where do you want to go?" She would answer, "There's a place with an excellent orchestra where everyone goes this summer, near Plainston." And to

Emory, "You don't mind if we're rather late getting back?"

She went downstairs, holding tight to Owen's arm for reassurance, but dropping his arm before they went onto the terrace.

The first small misfortune, he thought, was in Lavinia Wells's words: "I hope you both aren't too hungry. Dinner won't be for nearly an hour yet, because Emory is taking the latest possible train."

So then, they couldn't start until ten and wouldn't reach Harrison before two. Anne said softly, "It's going to storm." Lawrence said, "Not soon. Perhaps not tonight."

If it stormed her guardians might make some slight protest against her proposal to drive forty miles to dance.

He said, "I think driving through a storm is always exciting."

Anne said, too quickly, "Oh, so do I."

LAWRENCE KNOWLTON was as conscious as Lavinia of the sudden radiance upon that face which he always thought so charming, so much gentler and more trusting than any girl's face he had ever watched. But, by his work more trained in observation than Lavinia, he noticed Anne's extreme nervousness as they all sat in the quiet that comes upon people sometimes when they sit waiting for a storm. He noticed something else, when he turned to address to his hostess some inconsequential remark about the weather: Lavinia Wells's eyes were entirely remote from them.

She thought, "Things repeat. Not with any regularity, but—they do repeat."

That other time, when she had come up to the house from the meadow gate, she heard the first thunder when she crossed the terrace, and turned with some thought of calling to Rupert Alleyne to come back and wait until the storm ended. But he was already too far away to hear her voice.

Her mother had brought her for a visit with her old friend, Mrs. Wells. These two middle-aged women were so fond of each other that she knew they schemed to have her marry Emory, Mrs. Wells's son. But, since the first day of that summer visit, since her first hour of meeting Emory's cousin, Rupert Alleyne, she had known she would marry no one else, if she could help it.

That soon became apparent to the two mothers, and no doubt to Emory as well. She had not cared. How quickly small things repeated became important beloved habits to the young in love. One bright morning Rupert came on horseback, to ride below her window and call to her. After that she looked forward every day to the sound of his voice waking her. Still after so many years she could remember the sound of that voice. She could not remember exactly how many days they had shared, only the date of the day he had not come.

They shared perhaps a little more than three weeks, a few days less than a month. She must have been an old-fashioned and shy girl, else she would not have taken seriously as life itself those hours when she and Rupert walked through green meadows or considered that she pledged her heart forever with each of her kisses.

She watched Rupert's figure that day until it went out of her sight in the woods below the meadows. She went into the house then, disliking as always the sound of thunder. She dined with old Mrs.

Wells and her mother. The wind about the house, the crashing of thunder, the blue lightning flashes were so eerie that she would have been glad of Emory's steady face and calm voice at that dinner table. But he was away somewhere that evening.

The stars were dimming in a paling sky before she slept that night. Her last remembered thought before the grumbled interruption of sleep was of Rupert, who would be coming to wake her.

He did not come. He sent no message through a morning when puzzlement and a kind of dull hurt grew in her. At luncheon that day her mother said, "I've decided we had better go home this evening, Anne. I keep thinking of various things I should be doing at home and your father no doubt misses you."

Neither Mrs. Wells nor Emory had appeared all day. The servants seemed to go about their work with a kind of furtive excitement.

She said firmly to her mother, "I'm still hysterical after last night's storm. If you think we had better go home this evening I must telephone Rupert Alleyne to tell him to come to say good-by."

Her mother said, "No, I don't want you to telephone him."

That was the first time in her life that any desire to be defiant woke in Lavinia. Both her mother and her father were always indulgent to her. There had been no occasion to be defiant. But this—this was unbelievable.

"Mother, I am not twelve years old and this is the twentieth century. Why shouldn't I telephone a man whom I like or say good-by to him?" She went on, "Mother, I love him."

At those four words a sound small, terrifying, quickly suppressed, issued from between her mother's pretty lips. Clearly by tremendous effort, her mother spoke in a voice of complete indifference: "I would not treat you as if you were twelve without a special reason. You must trust me enough to know that. . . Come, now, one of the maids is waiting to help us pack."

HOW unfair that argument and—unanswerable. She followed her mother upstairs slowly, and slowly that long day dragged to its end. They dined alone in the Wells's great dining-room and her mother talked and talked. She was never a garrulous woman, but that night she talked as if sentenced never to stop—until Lavinia said to her, "Don't bother, Mother. I'm not waiting to ask questions. Only, I'll write to him, you know. (And he will come to see me there. Because he loves me, too.)"

Anything would have been less appalling as an answer than her mother's complete silence. She tried to break that silence by saying, "Rupert is Emory's own cousin and you completely approve of Emory. What is the difference?"

Her mother said only, "It's time we went upstairs and closed our suitcases."

She might have made sudden, violent protest against that response, except that when they passed, in the upstairs hallway, the door of Mrs. Wells's room there came through that closed door the sound of wild sobbing, unrestrained—as of one with grief too great for any help at all. It was the most dreadful sound that had ever come to Lavinia's ears.

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than a minute or two before train time. While they waited, a farm boy came up to Lavinia, said, "Message for you, miss," handed her an envelope, and walked away.

In the lights of their compartment she read that message, that only letter she ever had from Rupert Alleyn, under her mother's eyes, and without speaking handed it to her mother to read:

Lavinia,

I must go away for a little while. Do not forget me. I shall come back to you, one day.

Her mother said, "Oh, thank God. Thank God. It was he, then, after all."

She never explained those words, that night or afterward—nor the next day when she told Lavinia that her father's birthday present to her was a three months' trip to France, nor in all the days of that journey.

Which Lavinia had almost refused to make until she thought, "It will make the time pass more quickly until Rupert comes back for me."

Only once again was his name mentioned between her mother and herself.

"Lavinia, I may as well tell you now," her mother said. "Don't think again of that young man, Rupert Alleyn. You must not," and stopped as if she had said all she meant to say. But when her daughter answered quietly, "He is coming back to me, Mother," she said something else: "He went away because he had to go away. He will never come back to you."

Lavinia did not say, "I do not believe you," but she did not believe her. Not then.

In Paris, some three weeks after their arrival, appeared Mrs. Wells and Emory, both looking entirely tranquil.

Weeks went by. She had been home several months by the time she knew belief in Rupert's returning to her had dwindled. That belief was gone by the time another spring brightened the trees in the city's parks. By that spring she was "liking" Emory more and more, as no one could help liking him. He would never hurt her. Her father and mother would be delighted. . . .

OWEN NASH thought, "If no one breaks this uncanny silence, I shall have to, myself. Then, whatever I say, Anne will answer too excitedly, too ardently, so that her aunt will notice."

An utter piece of irrelevancy struck him. He wished he were dealing with Delphine's good, hard common sense instead of Anne's adoring looks. She would have had his letter by now. But whether she would be furious or grieved, or whether she would just shrug her lovely shoulders, he could not guess. She was the loveliest of New York blues singers. She was the most amusing woman he had met in his life. Nevertheless, he had better forget her.

And there Lavinia Wells sat staring at nothing. Knowlton looked as miserable as one of his own patients. Anne was paler and paler with excitement—or more probably with fright. Owen said in a furious voice, "What is the matter with all of you?" Anne and the others stared at him, startled.

There were footsteps coming through the hall that saved him any attempt at explanation.

It was Lawrence Knowlton only who saw all the effects of that quiet entrance of Emory Wells and a man whom he did not know.

Anne did not take her blue eyes, still startled, away from Owen. Owen stood up, very quickly, took a step toward that strange man, and his face tightened as if suddenly he had come upon danger.

Mrs. Wells rose and stood swaying as if she saw a ghost.

And Emory Wells looked stricken, ten, fifteen years older than when Lawrence had last seen him, a week ago.

The tall, lean man beside him strode forward toward Lavinia. But he turned his head to Owen and his even voice was mocking: "Odd to meet so far from Shanghai, isn't it, Nash?"

Lavinia looked beyond the stranger to her husband, and back again to him whose voice was different now, was warm and intimate, though it held a kind of mockery still: "You see, I did come back, eventually. . . ."

OUTSIDE Delphine's high, long windows the sky was darkening. But she did not notice the oncoming storm. She paced up and down. Sometimes she stopped to reread Owen's letter. Sometimes she looked at herself in one of the wall mirrors, as if in her own face she could find any answer—as if she thought it might have lost its beauty suddenly. For the first time now, she had to think about love. Before, she had been able to take for granted that anyone she chose would love her. Only, until she met Owen Nash, she had not chosen. The very few people in New York and Hollywood who knew Delphine well said that she was "a good sort."

She thought of that, dully, walking up and down across the polished floor. She'd tried to be "a good sort" to Owen Nash. A kind of rage shook her young, round slenderness, her famous tawny head. Her much-photographed face, with its velvety dark eyes, its wide, beautifully shaped mouth, its firm chin above a lovely neck, quivered. She thought she was going to weep, she who'd known since she'd known anything that tears were the most useless things on earth! She stiffened, anger rising.

What to do, with no one to help or advise her! Well, there'd been no one to help or advise her since she was a child of ten in a West Side tenement. In a minor cabaret, when she was fourteen, the wizened, shrewd, kindly man who became her agent and her manager "discovered" her and helped her to her chance. In her work he would help her always, but for the rest she had to go on guessing, noticing the way "nice girls" talked, dressed, behaved, and, as she progressed, how "nice" apartments were furnished.

She said aloud, to that lovely room and that far, amazing city view, "Nice girls. I've been as 'nice' as that debutante he's marrying could possibly be."

In a manner of speaking she was right. She had been, at least, as moral, having seen, too young, too many pretty girls lose all their chances by losing their heads over someone. She had not "lost her head" even, quite, over Owen Nash's handsome face, though she had lost her heart to him that first evening.

He was so precisely the sum of those dreams, necessarily practical, of girls like her, without family, position, or money to help them. Handsome, "society," "sophisticated," sure of himself. If she knew, in some part of her level head, that

he was glitter somewhat tarnished, that he was more or less outcast from the sort of life to which he had been born, that knowledge troubled her not at all. She was tolerant of whatever he'd done. She loved him because he was so sure where she was so uncertain. Sure of speech and accent and choice of word, of taste in clothes.

She loved him. So for three years she flatly refused to consider having an affair with him and waited, a realist in spite of herself, for the magnitude of her success to suggest to him the idea of marriage. Then, from her point of view, everything would be entirely simple. He could be, to her, "associate manager."

She had come very near, through the last winter, to realization of her hope, until, in March, he met that girl, Anne Wells. Even of that meeting he told her—he was grown so used to telling her things. And she had smiled, been skillful and just sufficiently interested, so that he would continue to tell her things. Though, she said to herself over and over, the girl's family wouldn't consent. Once she said that to him. She supposed, bitterly, that because she'd said, "They won't consent," he had not told her of his plan for elopement until he wrote.

She said to herself, "It is too late." And then she said, "I wonder if it is?" And decision came to her at last. . . . She called her maid. She commanded information about trains. She arranged her own hair, chose clothes, put them on quickly. Owen might hate her, briefly. He would get over that.

She telephoned the fashionable hotel roof where she was making much-publicized appearances and pleaded an emergency. Within half an hour she was walking down the station platform to the Berkshire express. And that was at the same moment when, on the terrace at Riverview, Rupert Alleyne said, "You see, I did come back, eventually."

IN THE second that those words echoed, her eyes upon Rupert as though by long thought she had summoned a ghost at last, Lavinia looked beyond him to her husband's face. It was as she had never seen it—wretchedly unhappy, angry, even desperate. Then years of practice in doing the things expected of her stood by her. "Rupert! How little changed you are! I don't think you've ever met Anne Wells, Emory's niece, or Dr. Knowlton. This is Rupert Alleyne. Owen Nash you know?"

"Yes, I know him, Lavinia."

She ignored that, went on with trivialities: "Anne, pour a cocktail for your uncle"—not that that was a triviality, because Emory looked actually faint—"and one for Mr. Alleyne."

"We've waited dinner, of course, Emory, but I think we'll have it straightaway, now—if you don't mind not changing. Anne and Mr. Nash drove up from Westbury. I'm glad you all arrived before the storm." Would no one help her out?

It was Dr. Knowlton who came to the rescue: "How heavy the air is, before a storm. I've often thought scientists will discover some special nervous reaction to thunderstorms that will account for most of the old superstitions about them."

Lavinia sat down, motioned Rupert to a chair beside hers. Anne moved to Owen's side. Emory said, "I'll just brush up a bit. Ready in five minutes, Lavinia."

She nodded to him. Rupert said softly, "Lavinia, you're even lovelier than you were as a girl." She disregarded that, stretched her white arm back to where, on the terrace wall, there was a bell concealed. She rang. When the butler came she said, "Martin, show Mr. Alleyne where he's to wash before dinner, and announce dinner as soon as Mr. Wells comes down."

When Rupert went away she thought, with a kind of bitter amusement, that it was odd to seem to have nothing at all to say to someone who had possessed a corner of her heart over ten years.

Emory appeared in the doorway, looking now more than naturally composed. Lavinia heard Rupert's footsteps. Then there, blessedly, was Martin.

"Dinner is served, madam."

THE storm was hurrying the darkness. In Riverview's oak-paneled dining-room Martin turned on the side lights. The sudden brightness on the faces of those beginning to eat chilled soup showed no strain very apparent.

"My imagination ran away with me," Lavinia thought. "There was nothing strange, really. Rupert's arrival disturbed me, of course." Looking at him in the clear light, she knew he was changed, was grown older than her memory of him, that his handsome face was a trifle harder-looking. But what she felt, looking at him, she did not know.

Rupert spoke to her softly: "Lavinia, you have not said that you are glad to see me."

He knew that was a mistake, even before she answered. "I'm not sure that I am."

On Rupert's other side Owen Nash said tentatively, "You're looking fit, Alleyne."

Very much in need of feeling superior to someone at that table, Rupert shrugged. "I've got on, even without one particular hundred and fifty dollars American."

The flush, rising to the roots of Nash's hair, was amusing, too. He did not answer.

The thunder roared again in the room, though as yet there was no sound of rain outside. Upon those six people fell a kind of nervous quiet.

Over and over to himself Emory Wells said, "I never meant her to know. She cared about him. Now she'll have to know."

And, opposite, his wife sat like a carved, painted statue, thinking, "Beside me, close enough to touch, is Rupert, whom I've always loved. I suffered when I lost him, so that now I'm more afraid of suffering again than glad that he is back."

At her left Lawrence Knowlton sensed a situation, several situations possibly. Beside him Anne, whom he loved hopelessly—if a young man ever loves quite hopelessly—and inconsistently had made vague plans about (for the next year or the year after, when he might be more successful), was sitting tense as a person terribly afraid.

She sat, really frightened. Since the minute before Emory brought in that stranger, whom clearly Owen knew and hated, she had been frightened by his sudden, savage anger. As if he were a stranger, too, whom she knew no better than she knew Mr. Alleyne, though in two or three hours she was putting her life in his charge. Would he ever turn on her with that furious, quiet voice?

Owen Nash's handsome face was sullen.



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Of all possible mischances that this evening could have produced, the sudden appearance of Rupert Alleyne was the worst. Give Rupert five minutes alone with Emory Wells or his wife, and Owen Nash's chances of taking their niece dancing, or anywhere two minutes out of their sight, were vanished!

But Alleyne could not guess that he could interrupt an elopement if he liked. Besides, he had, no doubt, a hand of his own to play. He usually had one. And the face of his host, bringing him in, had been far from delighted. The best thing would be to ignore him and leave with Anne as quickly as possible after dinner.

**RICULOUS** to let remembrance of their last encounter disturb him now. He had been very much down on his luck, drifted into Shanghai in time for the Japanese shelling of the river forts. Life in the foreign concessions was going on, despite the fighting, with "business as usual" more or less. He supported himself with indifferent success at cards for a few days, until one evening, on his way to a poker game at the house of a rich Chinese who considered himself Westernized, he met Alleyne and took him along.

At the house of the Chinese they were the only Americans at the moment the game was interrupted by the entrance of Communist rioters. There was a good deal of money on the table at the instant when the owner extinguished the lights. Probably about \$150 American of that money did belong to Rupert Alleyne. But Owen did not stop to consider that when he snatched it and ran for escape.

He had been losing, he was nearly penniless, the Communists would have taken the money if he had not, and were no doubt credited with taking it, as it was. Though he did hear much later that Alleyne was declaring all over Shanghai he was a crook. However, no one paid too much attention to the declarations of Alleyne, who was supposed, himself, to be agent for Wei-fu's smuggling fleet, and in time Owen almost forgot the adventure. If only Alleyne made no scene, no accusations!

Rupert Alleyne didn't anticipate making any scene. He simply resolved to make Nash, who looked sufficiently prosperous, pay him \$150 immediately after dinner. Then he forgot him, regarding Lavinia's lovely profile. How truly he had loved her for some summer weeks. Enough so that he had not quite managed to forget her, through years when he had not dared hope to see her again. Until one day, one man among the uncounted hundreds of men one met in the East, knew for a day or two and never met again, spoke of Riverview and the village near Riverview, said, in answer to one of Rupert's careful, casual questions, "Old Mr. Petrie? Oh, he died last year."

So, he could go home. All the long voyage he evolved plans for that home-coming. He would go to Emory and make him give him money for a fresh start. Emory would give it. It was only necessary to remind him that but for the accident of Bevan Petrie's presence on a country road one night, he, Emory Wells, and not Rupert Alleyne, could have tried gentleman-adventuring for fifteen years and seen how he liked it. But for Bevan Petrie, Lavinia Wells would have been Lavinia Alleyne.

It was not until he confronted Emory, and saw his calm face white at sight of him, that the last bit of his plan evolved. He would make Emory invite him to Riverview immediately. So here he was. And here he would stay. It was stupid to feel ill at ease, to think as he would have thought of another person, with some pity, of that young man who'd loved Lavinia truly and had not meant to be a bad lot.

Martin said, to Emory, "Mr. Thomas Carrington on the telephone, Mr. Wells." Relief showed in Emory's face. He stood up without any excuse at all. When he came back his voice to Rupert was very matter of fact: "Mr. Carrington will be here within two hours. He's driving up. So we shall be able to complete our discussion this evening."

"The faithful family lawyer to the rescue. But don't you think he's years and years too late?"

"Perhaps—" Emory started to go on, and stopped.

Rupert Alleyne said slowly, "But Bevan Petrie is dead."

At that extraordinary irrelevant remark even Anne roused herself, glanced from her uncle's face to her aunt's and back again, recognized apparently that she'd made no special contribution to dinner-table conversation. "Owen, let's go dancing after dinner. It will be exciting driving, and the air will be fresh outdoors."

Emory addressed his niece with more severity than Lavinia ever remembered hearing him use to her: "You must be mad. Why, a tree could fall on you! I shan't permit it. You stay in and entertain our guests. There's some business I have to discuss with your aunt after dinner."

ANNE sat with blue eyes desperate now, staring at Owen, who carefully ignored the intendment of that look.

Lawrence Knowlton saw her look and Nash's refusal to notice it. It began to be so plain to him that something more than an evening's dancing was planned between those two—and Emory's opposition was interfering—that he wondered no one else seemed to notice.

Lavinia said, "Coffee in the drawing-room. The rain will come too soon to risk the terrace," and they all rose.

At one end of the drawing-room was a narrow, screened, old-fashioned veranda, seldom used since the terrace at the other side above the gardens was built. As Lavinia poured coffee Lawrence Knowlton was so suddenly conscious of a dreadful choking feeling in his throat that he thought he could not bear that charming room where the air felt heavy with approaching storm. He went out on the veranda without waiting for coffee. Then, the veranda being too narrow for the tumult of his emotions, he went outside into the almost black dark, up and down the pathway between the rows of peonies.

His feet were frozen to the pathway. Someone had come out on the veranda. He didn't want to have to talk until he was sure his voice was steady.

Then, in an instant, he could not have interrupted. Anne's soft voice said, "Owen, what shall we do?"

Owen Nash answered very quickly, "I'll go inside and talk. Go upstairs and change into tweeds, something practical. No one will miss you for a few minutes if I'm still there. Go out the back way. Get



my car out of the garage, drive it to the road, just a few feet beyond the entrance to the drive. I'll meet you there, in ten minutes. Only—hurry, hurry, hurry!"

Anne went away. Lawrence saw an oblong of light widen and narrow when she opened the inner door of the veranda and closed it again. He thought, "I ought to stop this. If I were just a friend of the family I could stop it."

He stopped thinking. The door onto the veranda had opened again. Perhaps Anne had come back to say she would not go. That mocking voice of Alleyne's said, "Well, Nash, have you been robbing anyone at cards lately? And do you happen to have a hundred and fifty dollars?"

Lawrence heard Owen say, "I didn't plan to steal your money, as you call it, and I'll pay you back very shortly. I need what I happen to have with me."

"For what? Our host doesn't seem in favor of the idea that you take Miss Wells dancing."

Lawrence Knowlton stood still. He had never deliberately eavesdropped in his life before, but a kind of determination rose in him now. He would interfere. Dully he thought, "She'll despise me. But—I'm not doing this to improve her opinion of me."

Those voices rose a little:

"I'm going inside, Alleyne. There's no use in this."

"Suppose I say you're not going inside, or anywhere, until you pay me the money you snatched off that card table?"

"Look here, I'll pay you the money tomorrow. Let's go in. Our hostess will be wondering about us."

"She and her husband are in conference. Didn't you hear him say at dinner there was something he wanted to discuss with her?"

"What do you need the money tonight for? You're staying over, aren't you?"

"There's something very odd about this, Nash. I don't need the money. I just want it. The odd thing is that though I've never liked you and have known since Shanghai, at least, that you have no courage, still that doesn't account for your extreme haste to get rid of me. What are you up to?" Alleyne's voice was more excited: "Wait a minute. Little Miss Wells came out here with you. She's gone and you're in a hurry to go. She stared at you all through dinner as if—You aren't planning to marry into my family, are you?"

"Nonsense."

"That is no answer at all. Where is Miss Wells?"

"How should I know?"

RUPERT ALLEYNE spoke as to himself: "I extremely dislike my cousin Emory—but I doubt whether I dislike him enough to let him have you for a nephew-in-law."

"That comes well from you. Your reputation's rather worse than mine."

"I've earned my living in odd ways, but I've earned it. You've pretended to earn yours."

"When you get through discussing my character I'm going inside."

"When I say you're going inside, you're going inside."

There was a small, dull sound, Alleyne's voice saying sharply, "No, you don't," and the unmistakable sound of a blow.

Lawrence Knowlton ran up the path. As he opened the outer door of the veranda

the first rain splashed down across his face.

Rupert Alleyne was striking a match, leaning over a limp, crumpled figure. He looked up without special surprise. "Where did you come from? He swung wide and missed me. I got him on the chin." As if that were sufficient explanation.

Lawrence bent down.

"Oh, yes; you're a doctor, aren't you? He's all right, I expect. Only, I don't think he'll be going anywhere for the next ten minutes or so."

"No," agreed Knowlton.

With a strength surprising in one so slender Rupert Alleyne heaved Owen into a porch hammock, suddenly revealed by a lightning flash. "We may as well leave him here. He doesn't look as pretty as usual to entertain our hostess."

EMORY WELLS took the departure of his guests in various directions as politeness, since he had said, "I have important business to discuss with my wife." But, left alone with her in front of the wide fireplace, he did not know how to begin, and stood opposite her seated figure regarding her as if he did not know her very well.

Something like that he was thinking. That she was gentle, agreeable—not in their ten years of marriage did he remember any quarrel between them—decorative, much better than he usually—if not this evening—at talking to people, putting them at their ease. She was thoughtful, too, always remembering to ask him about weather in New York and how he felt, and if there was anything special he would like to eat. A quiet man, not stupid, but sometimes thinking himself so when in assemblages of quick, bright, glancing people. He had that shyness which sometimes afflicts rich men who are kindly, as if he felt it necessary to be slightly apologetic for being more fortunate than most people.

Privately, ever since that day Lavinia said "Yes" at last, he considered himself the most fortunate man he knew. Only, he was never able to tell her that or anything like it. She liked him now; he was sure of that. She had for him a quiet affection. They were good friends. But, watching now her still face, he wished she really loved him. She would be able to understand better that he had not just taken advantage of Rupert's misfortune—that he had been willing, because he so admired his handsome, "brilliant" cousin, to help him while he could. If Bevan Petrie had not walked down that road, he might have been "helping" yet and have never been married to Lavinia.

He shivered a little in the warm room. But—something hardened in him then. He would not stand for it. He would fight for his own.

He sighed, and said heavily, "Lavinia, do you remember how suddenly Rupert went away?"

That was a stupid beginning, but he couldn't think of a better one.

"Yes, Emory."

The morning that Rupert had not called outside her window. The day of mounting doubt and dread. The evening when, on a station platform, a boy put in her hand his only letter to her.

"It's an old, troublesome story. I never meant you to know it. It will distress you."

"Since you brought him here tonight

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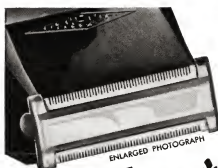
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**10**

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I've realized that I was bound to know—whatever it was—at last."

Emory burst out with what, it appeared, was a private indignation of his own. "He didn't mean you to know—even now. Comes into my office, cool as you please, and announces he's free for the week end and would like to see Riverview and you. I wish he'd never seen you!"

She said, very quietly, "Why did you let him come?"

"Because there's no reason I should be afraid of him." But he still looked, if not afraid, disturbed.

She said, "Better tell me now, Emory. What is all this business of waiting for Thomas Carrington?"

"Because it's my word against Rupert's—and I don't want you to have to believe me against him. Thomas knows about it, though secondhand."

She scarcely heard that last. Her mind was echoing, "I don't want you to have to believe me against him." How much Emory must have guessed of the lastingness of that old "fondness" of hers. Her immediate instinct was to reassure him: "You're dreading this too much, Emory. I couldn't ever blame you very much. You might do something mistaken, but I don't believe that you could ever do anything ignoble."

TEARS came into his eyes. Not in the years of her marriage had she seen him shed tears. She was too startled to find quickly words to comfort him.

He said, in a moment, "People like me who are fairly commonplace often want to make heroic gestures. I tried to make one once and missed it badly."

Before she could speak, Emory went on: "I wanted to talk to you, to tell you my side of the story alone. I thought it would be easier. But now, I can't. I can't at all. It would be like sneaking behind that fellow's back. It's better to let Tom tell it."

"Just as you wish."

He spoke quickly then: "One thing I must know, Lavinia. Please tell me the truth and don't attempt to spare me. Tell me whether you've ever been sorry that you married me, Lavinia."

She said, "Of course I've never been sorry," too quickly, before she stopped to feel the meaning of his words.

"No, Lavinia. That won't do. Thank you very much, my dear, but it was too rapid. I'll ask it a different way. Tell me—if you were free tonight and you had to choose again between him" (he seemed suddenly unable to say Rupert's name) "and me, knowing just what you know about us both, which would you choose?"

She stared at him. Even if that old, dreadful mystery was at last to be explained, even if Emory were to blame, not Rupert, that far summer was irrevocable. She could not again find herself or Rupert as they used to be.

Her face changed, as Emory watched it, grew younger, less composed. Her eyes were on him, but not as if she saw him at all. He recognized the instant she did "see" him again. She steadied. She said, "If I were nineteen, Emory, I would choose Rupert perhaps."

Emory shrugged his shoulders. "You have a right to choose. But knowing all the facts. There's no other way now. We'll wait for Thomas." He went out of the room before she could answer.

She had the most dreadful sense that she had failed him. She sat still for a long time. Then Martin came in and said, "Mr. Wells told me to tell you that Mr. Carrington phoned again, that the storm was too bad for him to drive through, so he was taking the Berkshire express at Langton. Mr. Wells has started to the station to meet him." . . .

Anne, waiting in Owen's roadster, turned off the car's headlights so that she would be less conspicuous waiting there.

There was a splash of rain on the roadster's top and then suddenly a great downpour. She closed the side windows as fast as possible. By the time she had them closed they were blurred with rivulets of rain. She was shut up in the roadster as in a black box in a black room.

There was a new sound, very near, a sound of running feet. In a kind of panic, she switched on the headlights, saw a down-bent drenched figure, not Owen's.

Dr. Knowlton pulled the car door open, slipped in on her left, so that she had to move away, out of the driver's seat. His voice was reckless as she'd never heard it: "Shall we go dancing, Anne?"

She hoped she sounded unexcited, "No, thank you."

"We can't sit here, you know. A tree might fall on you, as Mr. Wells said."

"What are you doing out in this storm?"

"Nothing special. What are you?"

"Waiting for someone."

He was immediately grave. "I shouldn't, if I were you, Anne. I should let me take you home to Lavinia."

So he knew! "No, thank you, again."

The dashboard lights had switched on with the headlights. She could see his face quite clearly.

"Then we may as well sit here, I suppose. Would you like a cigarette?"

She decided on directness. "I want you to go back to the house and leave me here."

"No."

"Owen will come and make you go."

"I doubt it." He hesitated, and went on: "I know I'm being interfering—but please believe me I'm not doing it for any reason but—"

"For any reason but being interfering. What other could you have?"

He looked at her. "Various good reasons. This, for instance: if you are sure you want to marry Owen Nash you'll be just as sure tomorrow. Then you can tell your people about it."

SHE didn't answer that. She had just thought of something he'd said before. "What did you mean when you said you doubted that Owen would be coming?"

"He's been detained."

"Stop being flippant. Where is Owen?"

"He had a quarrel with Mr. Alleyne—or the revival of an old quarrel, I should say. Mr. Alleyne knocked him out."

"I don't believe you."

"Come back to the house and see for yourself."

"You just want me to go back so you can tell Emory to lock me in my room."

"I would do that too, to keep you from making so serious a mistake."

"What possible concern is it of yours?"

Lawrence Knowlton drew a long breath, said to himself, "There could be no more inappropriate moment," said aloud, "I could tell you that I was my concern because

your people have been so kind to me, and I want to keep you from doing something that will cause them great unhappiness. That would be true. But not the most important reason. Which is, that I happen to love you, myself."

"Lawrence, please go back to Riverview and leave me."

He thought, "She takes as much interest in my declaration of the state of my heart as if I'd just pointed out to her that it was raining."

But he wronged her a little. Her voice was gentler when she spoke again: "You are a strange young man. I have liked you. I'm sorry if you really think you are in love with me, because I am so happily in love that I hate to hear of anyone not being. . . . By the way, I'm sorry I said 'I don't believe you' about Owen, but—did you mean it or were you exaggerating a little for my own good?"

"I meant it. Rupert Alleyne knocked him out."

"Will you do something for me?"

"It depends, Anne."

"I want you to go back and get Owen and bring him here."

"No. I'm sorry. . . . No, I'm not sorry, either."

"Let's not quarrel again. How long do you think it will be before Owen is able to get here?"

"Some little time, I should say."

A voice outside the car said, "You and Alleyne underestimated my resiliency."

Owen swung open the door beside Lawrence, said furiously, "It took both you and him to manage this, didn't it? Well, I shan't forget it. Now, get out of the car!"

But Lawrence Knowlton put his foot on the starter, slipped into gear, with his left hand pulled the door toward him. Owen Nash, caught off balance, could not hold on. The car started moving fast. Anne reached for the ignition key. But, by then, Lawrence had a hand free to hold both her small wrists. . . .

**MINUTES** passed in the drawing-room, where Lavinia sat waiting for what she was not sure. Rupert Alleyne came in from the veranda quietly. Lavinia's heart jumped a little.

"Well, Lavinia!"

"Emory has gone to meet Thomas Carrington, Rupert."

He ignored that, conscious of an old, never quite forgotten excitement rising in him, rising more clearly than when he and she were very young and she had only the promise of perfection. Ah, if long ago he had not lost her, his life would have been all different.

"So you and I might sit in silence listening to a storm, by our own fireside, married all this time, Lavinia."

"Yes, I was thinking that, or something like it."

So she was prepared now to be as direct as he! He wondered, a little, why.

She went on, in that curious, even, calm voice, "Once very long ago we loved each other for some weeks. We were extremely young. We meet now, when I'm thirty precisely and you're—"

He interrupted, "Why, it's your birthday! I must have remembered the date every year for a half-dozen years. Then I forget. I'm thirty-five, Lavinia."

She said, "I was thinking about you be-

fore dinner. I was wondering whether you were dead—or very much older."

"Very much older?"

"Yes."

The monosyllable stopped him from whatever he might have said. Lavinia went on, "So am I. I don't mean that you have lost charm, looks, that sort of thing, any more than I have, perhaps, but—the feeling of being young, the sense of everything ahead, is gone from me—"

"Not from me, though, Lavinia. I've come back hoping that everything important might still be ahead."

"Your voice doesn't sound as if you believed that yourself."

"Yours sounds definitely now as if you'd made up your mind to dislike me."

"No, Rupert." She spoke with a kind of haste, an exigency that startled him.

"For once, for one hour of my life, I want to talk without reticence, not casually, to say what I mean, what I feel."

"As if this hour were all?"

"Yes."

"Why do you think it will be all?"

**SHE** did not answer. She was conscious of the most intense reluctance to say, "Emory said—" to mention Emory to him. Loyalties were such mixed things!

Rupert was mocking again: "I've been thinking of settling down in the neighborhood, casting myself for the role of 'old family friend.'"

"Rupert, stop it. Be honest with me for once."

"No. Because then I'd have to tell you why I went away, why I've returned. You may not like either story, and you'll hear them, soon enough. Your husband is determined that you shall. That I did not anticipate, but should have. Of course, his version and mine won't agree."

"Then I shall be obliged to believe him, because in the long time that I've known him I've never known him to tell the least untruth."

Rupert Alleyne flung back his dark head in a gesture she remembered she used to love. He laughed and laughed. "Emory told a series of very complicated lies at the time of my departure."

That sentence she could answer quickly: "We'll wait for him, to discuss what happened when you went away."

"Your loyalty is admirable, Lavinia. The deepest regret of my life is that it can't operate in my direction."

She spoke her thoughts aloud to that derisive, handsome face which was somehow so unhappy. "This is almost useless, Rupert. It will be completely useless if you won't help me, if you insist on being a flippant stranger."

He said, a little impatiently, "What do you want, Lavinia? . . . I know what I want. I want to kiss you."

Her eyes that were so much more green than gray flickered over him. "No; I want that least of all now, Rupert. It would be such a mockery of a summer when I kissed you and trusted you."

He winced. He looked as if he had received a sudden, sharp wound. "Lavinia, I wish that you might have been able to go on trusting me. There was—there is no reason that you should. Living is a tragic business. One is compelled to go on through years, each more tarnished than the year preceding. One grows less and less to resemble one's young self, of whom,

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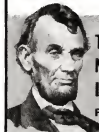
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with some slight justice, one used to be proud. Before any of the many compromises were made."

She spoke to something in his voice that sounded broken, not to his words: "Life isn't tragic altogether. It's a spectacle, a spectacle worth while often for the gallantry of the people in it, and—almost always—interesting. The only tragic thing is to take one's own part in it too desperately hard."

Rupert said, "I think we become the sum of the parts we have played, and one part compels the next."

"No, we can choose. We can always choose."

**H**E STARED at her. Could he choose still? Go away, leave her whatever memory she'd cherished of him from that time when they were so young, leave her in her secure life, cease to trouble Emory? And what would become of him if he did without Emory's money? If this carefully considered project failed, he would starve, or near enough to make no difference.

"Lavinia, that day I went away I was tempted to come to you, to ask you to go away with me. I wonder, would you have gone?"

Bright color rose under her white skin. Yes, she would have gone. And he had decided he couldn't be burdened with a girl on the long journey he was taking.

"You would have lived to hate me, Lavinia—or to be a different person, perhaps not half so charming."

"All that doesn't matter now, Rupert, since you went without me."

No, and no feeling between them now mattered particularly, or ever would. He knew that, and it was miserable knowledge. He shrugged his shoulders. "Let's be old friends talking casually, Lavinia. It will be better, after all."

He listened to her voice, not particularly to her words, and made himself be steady, as often before in tawdry crises, when he faced a quarrel with Wei-fu or the police were too curious about a particular cargo on one of the ships, he had made himself be steady. He had evolved a kind of technique for facing danger. It consisted in repeating over and over, until he had memorized it, the plan for his exact conduct in hours to come. Though he wondered why he had the sense of facing danger now, he did the same thing.

Carrington, if he remembered him, would advise his client to pay a reasonable amount to avoid any revival of a scandalous old story. He, Rupert, had set a figure in his mind that would be reasonable, measured against the size of Emory's resources, but adequate.

He would take Emory's money and go, West or South or any place that promised to be amusing. That was a bad job he'd made about considering staying in the neighborhood and becoming an old family friend. If he hadn't known before, he knew now, listening to Lavinia's voice, watching her lovely, serene face, that he could not endure himself, what he had become, if he ever had to see her again.

This small space of time passing was all she and he would ever share now. Better make the most of it. One part of him wanted her voice to go on and on, wanted time to stop, leaving them sitting in that pleasant room with the faint fragrance of peonies in the air, and the rain and the

dark shut out. And with another part of his mind he thought, "I'll be glad when Emory and Carrington get here and it's settled and over."

The car careened a little, going faster and faster down the curving road. Holding Anne Wells's wrists with his right hand, driving with his left, it took Lawrence more time than it would have otherwise to straighten it.

Suddenly her wrists relaxed between his fingers. "All right. This is undignified enough. Let my hands go, and I shan't attempt to stop the car."

He let go, put both hands on the wheel, and slowed the car a little. The rain was driving down in sheets and, in spite of his headlights, his range of vision was short.

"This road goes on as far as Canada, but it's an unpleasant night to drive so far. However, I will. I'll drive on until you promise me you'll let me take you straight home to your aunt."

"As the dominant male, Dr. Knowlton, you would be amusing if you were not so tiresome."

She considered the various alternatives. She could open the car door and jump out, thereby risking a broken neck and making fairly sure of minor injuries. She could scream when they encountered another car. That might lead to complications more embarrassing than effective in getting her back to Owen. She could plead, which would be damaging to her pride and probably have no other result.

It occurred to her suddenly that she might not be quite so angry or humiliated, either, if she were not conscious of the strangest feeling of relief. Thinking that, she laughed a little, and that small, pleasant, tinkling sound was so surprising to Lawrence that he slowed, almost to a stop, to hear it more clearly.

And thereby probably saved both their lives.

**T**HUNDERING down from the north, its driver half asleep, weary of storm, and holding the heavy wheel steady, came a truck round a curve straight at them. The road was narrow. The truck occupied its center. Swerving as far to the right as possible, Lawrence struck soft-soaked earth off the shoulder of the road, and the headlights showed plain enough a white fence, and nothing beyond.

The truck driver said something inarticulate and loud, and went on past them. Lawrence pulled the steering wheel over hard, but the car slid forward, hit the fence with a curious soft thud, and went on down, slowly at first and then quite quickly.

Anne thought of Lavinia and Emory. She happened to remember that Lavinia had said the young doctor beside her was "promising" and would do much good in the world. She remembered holding tight to Emory's hand crossing New York streets, when she was a quite big girl. In the light of one remaining headlight there were suddenly shapes that were trees.

Then there was blackness whirling too fast about her to permit even any vague wonder that she had not thought at all of Owen Nash. . . .

Emory Wells's chauffeur turned the car out of the driveway of Riverview. Emory thought, "I'll be an hour early for the train—but I couldn't stay there any longer, as if I were keeping Lavinia from



talking to Rupert, if she wanted to talk to him." Then he saw a man running in the road, toward the headlights, caught in their light for an instant, then gone into the blackness beside and behind the car, a figure curiously startling. Yet anyone would run for shelter from the downpour on a night like this. He should have told John to stop, but he didn't think fast enough. The man was a hundred yards behind them by now. He would no doubt see the night light in the gardener's cottage and stop in there.

So Emory did not recognize Owen Nash, but Owen recognized Emory's limousine when it passed him, thought the figure in back looked like Emory. Surely he could not be in pursuit of Anne already!

HE GLANCED back. His own car, with that fool of a doctor driving it, was long out of sight. He had been running to get a car to go after Knowlton, but if Wells was following—He hesitated, then decided that was most unlikely. Fortunately there was no chauffeur in the garage. He took Anne's roadster and started out.

At first, though furious with Knowlton, he was not especially concerned. It was a nuisance and a further exasperating delay, but—Anne would get Knowlton to turn back pretty quickly, somehow. He went up and down the road from Riverview almost patiently for a few minutes. But when there was no sight of that car returning he began to be dismayed. Anne would lose her nerve, given time to think. This chance would go with his other chances! First Alleyne, then this. His luck was out.

The road from Riverview was empty and dark. It stretched something over a mile to where three main routes joined. They might have taken any one of the three! He sat for a little while at the crossroads, and panic rose in him. If he took any one of the roads they might come back on either of the others, and he would miss them. Meanwhile, at Riverview, Alleyne would begin to talk or there would be inquiries for Anne and himself.

He got into the house without seeing anyone, changed into dry clothes quickly, and went on downstairs. Mrs. Wells and Alleyne were sitting in opposite chairs in front of the fireplace, and Alleyne looked anything but pleased to see him.

Lavinia asked, "Where's Anne?" He answered easily, "Gone to bed. She was tired." He would have to think of something to do quickly, when Knowlton brought Anne back, to stop whatever Knowlton might say. Owen thought of the long miles to Harrison and the amiable justice of the peace, of his dwindling chances of getting there. Thought once of Delphine, who would be singing now.

And Rupert thought of the minutes slipping by, slipping by—and whatever he might have found to say to Lavinia, left unsaid forever now.

It occurred to Lavinia suddenly that between Owen and Rupert was the strangest resemblance, not of feature or coloring even, something unseizable—a restlessness, implying, perhaps, some characteristic that sent men adventuring, to become in the end minor authorities on the Far East, but probably not good American husbands. . . .

Thomas Carrington sat upright in his Pullman chair on the Berkshire express

and occasionally nodded approvingly at his brief case, containing a document which was, he felt, vindication of his old friend and client, Emory Wells. And Emory didn't know there was any such document in existence! There wouldn't have been, except that Bevan Petrie had been realist enough, even on his deathbed, to provide against an injustice that could have been committed afterward. Well, Bevan had been a lawyer, too—and lawyers provided against even just possible eventualities.

Of course, some things could not be provided against in advance—such as what that odd, quiet wife of Emory's would think about it all. Women usually thought the unexpected and invariably were furious at things having been kept from them. He supposed now Emory would be obliged to be realistic. He must know that his hasty telephone conversation that afternoon had shown clearly he realized, at last, that Rupert was no good at all.

Thomas Carrington, who had never been handsome and had grown fat, but had made a distinguished name for himself, looked about for distraction. He found it quickly enough. One of the most beautiful girls he had ever seen was sitting in the Pullman chair opposite.

Thomas Carrington did not frequent night clubs or go to talking pictures. Nor had he been to a revue since his college days. So he did not recognize the face opposite his.

Delphine looked like someone's sheltered young daughter, just barely old enough to be permitted to travel alone. Actually, Thomas Carrington thought the girl's parents were pretty careless to let her take a night train by herself.

HE BECAME aware that she was getting off the train at the same station as he, when, as he was putting on his raincoat, she spoke to the porter about a dressing case, and put on her own raincoat. Her family's chauffeur would no doubt bring an umbrella and wraps for her. He was a busy man. His thoughts had been only courteous, and a little wistful, because in the rare moments between intervals of being busy he was sometimes surprisingly lonely. But there was Emory, looking worried enough, and he was busy again!

With Emory in the darkness of the rear seat of the limousine, Thomas decided that bluntness was the thing: "Well, Rupert's back for blackmail, I suppose."

"I suppose so." Emory didn't sound as if that was what worried him.

"He won't get away with it. . . ."

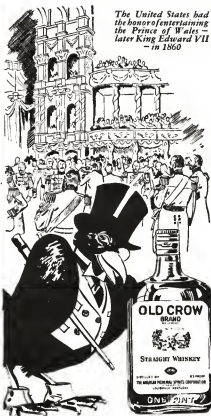
Emory interrupted: "I suppose not—I suppose Delphine'll believe me, or pretend she does. But—there's something no one ever told you when my mother and Bevan Petrie told you the rest."

"What?"

"That Lavinia was in love with Rupert, would have married him. I think perhaps she loves him yet. So perhaps we should never tell her." Emory hurried on: "I was her second choice. She has been a perfect wife. How she feels really, I can't tell. I called you because you're detached, yet you know us all."

Thomas said, "She was spared a great deal, not marrying Rupert."

A voice he would not have recognized as his old friend's said, huskily, "How can



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anyone be sure? If she'd married him, she might have made him different."

"And might not have." Thomas made himself be firm. "You have nothing at all to blame yourself for, except failure in a gesture absurdly quixotic."

"If I'd succeeded she could have had Rupert, whom she wanted."

"Look here, Emory. You're exaggerating. I'm sure Lavinia's fond of you, even if, when she was a young girl..."

"Fond!" Emory repeated. "What does that mean? I'm 'fond' of twenty people, including old Miss Johnson, who's been a file clerk in the office since before I was born, and my butler." He went on quickly: "I hated telling you that about Lavinia—that she was not in love with me. But you have to know. Because, when we get home, you look at her, and decide whether it's any good hurting her, perhaps, or troubling her. I can't tell. I dread having her stay with me against her will. I dread having her think I was weak and ungenerous."

"She'll be altogether unjust if she thinks any of those things." Emory didn't answer.

After a minute Thomas Carrington said, "I'll use my judgment." He had more faith in the document in his brief case than in his judgment on a woman's feelings. But clearly there was no good to be obtained in telling Emory about that document just yet.

By now, in the rain and the black dark of the taxi, Delphine no longer cared much whether she ever got to Riverview. Reasons for her determination which had seemed so plain, so justifiable, starting out on her journey, were grown confused. After all, she was thrusting herself into the house of strangers, to make a scene. That was what it amounted to!

She became conscious that the driver was stopping the car, in a stretch of empty road. He spoke to her: "There must have been an accident."

She looked out. There was a flashlight, which looked as if it were tied to a broken fence rail, shedding a small separate glow against the car's headlights. . . .

**BLAZING** circles spun round in the blackness, or the circles were spinning in her head. There was a voice, saying, "Anne, Anne, my darling, speak to me."

Her head cleared very slowly. But the blazing circles went on, in her left wrist, of all silly places. Abruptly she sat up. The rain was pouring down. A man's coat fell over her shoulder. Lawrence Knowlton's face, coming close into the center of a light, was so miserable it made her laugh. The light came from a flashlight set on a rock. On the edge of the glow it cast was a car, very much wrecked.

She remembered suddenly. "There you are, Lawrence. We pretty nearly died together, didn't we?"

"Don't try to talk, my dearest." Well, and he'd been saying, over and over, "Speak to me." Men were so unreasonable! Something occurred to her: "Quite all right; really all my fault, Lawrence. I should have let you take me home, as you wished."

Why, his breath was coming in great sobs! She stared at him.

He said unevenly, "I was afraid you had fractured your skull or broken your back. Will you please try to stand up, so

that I can be sure you are all in one piece, my dear."

Then her head cleared. She had tried to move her left hand and the sudden intensity of pain was localized. The rest of the world became normal by comparison.

"I'm in one piece, I'm sure, except my wrist."

He steadied instantly, became matter of fact, touching her wrist.

"You are a doctor, aren't you, Lawrence?" She said that between teeth set with pain.

"Your wrist's just a painful sprain. I can make it more comfortable, tying it with a handkerchief, if you can draw about a hundred long breaths while I'm doing it."

His matter-of-factness was a help.

"WHAT now?" she asked.

"We've got to get up the hill that we fell down."

"Like Jack and Jill?"

"Dearest, you're so brave."

"There's no special reason you should be calling me 'dearest.' It's odd I don't mind. I'm not a bit angry with you any more."

"Darling, I'll never bother you again after this evening, but I'm so glad you're not dead!"

"So am I that you're not."

Then, she could tell, he made himself be practical. "Do you feel like standing up now, Anne?"

"No. It seems too much trouble. What happened to the truck?"

"It went right on its way, not knowing. I'll help you up, sweet."

"All right."

She staggered a little, and was grateful for his arm around her. But the first steps up the slippery hill were too much. The effort made the pain in her wrist *crescendo*.

"No can do, Lawrence, my dear. You leave me here and go up and get help."

She was surprised that he left her, with no more ado, and took the flashlight. And her wrist ached, dreadfully.

After what seemed a long time, there he was again, sliding down the hill toward her, with a lighted branch in one hand. "I fastened the flashlight to the broken fence rail. It'll stop the first car that comes along."

The lighted branch sizzled and went out. It seemed entirely natural that Lawrence should put his arm around her to comfort her in the darkness. "Do you know, Anne," he said, "if you had not laughed, up on the road, I wouldn't have slowed the car, to listen and make sure you weren't still angry. If I hadn't slowed the car we would have hit that truck head on."

She wanted to say something about the strangeness of life, of which she became suddenly aware in that instant. But the words were simply too much trouble.

Then there was the sound of a motor above them and far off, coming closer, and a sound of brakes put on quickly.

Lawrence called, "We're down here! Have you got a rope?"

Another flashlight was turned on him and Anne. A voice vaguely familiar said, "Why, it's Miss Anne Wells and the young doctor."

Anne said, "Hello, Jerry." Jerry, of course, who drove a station taxi.

Jerry, with Lawrence's assistance, was able to pull Anne up, without difficulty,

except that the moment's scramble gave her wrist bad twinges.

The rain had stopped as suddenly as it had begun.

Beside the station taxi a slender, pretty figure stood, who said, "Miss Wells! You did have a close thing of it," and helped her into the car with a kind of graceful competence.

Anne said, "Close enough."

Lawrence said to Jerry, "No use to do anything about that car down there before morning," and, to the girl, "I hope it won't be much out of your way to take us to a place called Riverview. Miss Wells's wrist needs to be tied up better and, as you see, we're both about as wet as could be."

Jerry spoke with the matter-of-factness of neighborhood taxi drivers who know most of their passengers by name. "Riverview's where she's going," he said, and started the car.

THE girl had seated herself on one of the small seats, leaving Anne and Lawrence in back. Lawrence had made no protest, thinking that naturally she wished to be as far from their wetness as possible. She turned back and faced them. "Yes, I was going to Riverview." There was some difference in her voice that was a little puzzling.

Anne said, "I live there."

"I know."

"Were you coming to see Aunt Lavinia?"

"No."

Anne gave it up, but Lawrence tried: "I'm Dr. Knowlton, and this is Miss Anne Wells."

"Call me Delphine," the girl said.

The faintly seen white oval of her face meant nothing to Lawrence, but Anne guessed. "The Delphine?"

"If you mean the night-club one."

"I've heard you sing."

"A lot of people have." To that indifferent sentence, Anne found no answer.

There was a minute of silence, in which Anne thought how pleasant it would be to put on dry clothes, and that her wrist didn't really hurt much when she didn't have to move it, and that what she would say to Owen was difficult to say, and that—that Lawrence was nice.

His thoughts, of a young man dreadfully in love, were completely chaotic.

And Delphine's mind raced. Anne Wells, who should have been miles on her way to marry Owen, found with this strange doctor instead! So her journey had been unnecessary. Or had it been? She said, "I suppose you just want to get home and to bed, Miss Wells."

"I want to change my clothes but, strangely, I'm not tired at all now. I was, dreadfully. I suppose that's reaction, Lawrence."

"Yes, darling."

He called her "darling." The word didn't mean as much as the voice saying it. But, where was Owen? Delphine was not, immediately, to know, because they turned into a driveway and Anne said quickly to Lawrence, "I don't want Lavinia to see me like this—or Emory. I do hope Martin's still up! You come along upstairs and fix my wrist properly, and I'll get you some dry things of Emory's."

Delphine hesitated only a moment. "Emory! Lavinia!" Those strangers

would get her no nearer to finding out what had happened to Owen. "May I go along with you, Miss Wells? It's you, in a manner of speaking, that I came to see." And let them look at her as oddly as they pleased!

They met no one but the butler. Delphine sat in Anne's pretty room, while the butler went for bandages, while Lawrence bound up Anne's wrist.

The butler came back with hot coffee and a tray of sandwiches. Delphine began to wonder whether she was ever going to be left alone with Miss Wells, to find out where Owen was. But Dr. Knowlton finally took his coffee cup and a sandwich, said, "I will dry out now—and you'd better, Anne," and departed down the hall.

Anne put on a soft, quilted bathrobe, rubbed her dark hair vigorously with a bath towel and her one good hand.

Delphine said, "Here, let me do that for you."

"Thanks, it is a bit awkward."

Anne was making a rather frantic effort to pull herself together. The clock on her dressing table pointed to ten minutes past twelve. At that minute, or minutes ago, she might have been in Harrison, saying the words that would make her the wife of Owen Nash. She had known fear of death, in the last hours, and Owen had receded. Owen had become a little unbelievable. His excuses for insisting on a secret marriage were grown thin and shabby.

All the spring she had loved him! She couldn't bear that love to end shabbily and sadly, because—because it had been beautiful beyond anything she'd known. She must go to Owen. She must put on some clothes and go downstairs to where he was with her aunt and uncle—where he was, desperately worried.

Stupid, to feel so dully that she couldn't decide what her own heart wanted. Then she thought—the first completely adult thought of her life—"I really don't know much about anything, people—what makes them do the things they do—or myself even."

Well, one had to go on, whether one knew much or little, deciding things simply—as, for instance, this: She had promised Owen she would marry him, so she would marry him.

DELPHINE spoke for the first time in minutes: "I do have a good reason for asking to see you—please believe that." And then: "Are you going to marry Owen Nash?"

Her voice was somehow so convincing that it prevented any protest against her question. Anne said, "Yes, I think so."

"Why didn't you run away with him, tonight?"

"Things happened." Then Anne saw the implications of the question. "How did you know?"

Delphine stood up, moved a step or two to the window, regarded the blackness that was lightening now where the moon would rise, turned back to the room, to Anne. "Because Owen told me about it."

"Why should he tell you?"

"Before I'm able to explain, Miss Wells, I shall have to explain various other things—if you'll give me five minutes of your time, as the salesmen put it."

Anne made one protest then: "This is all rather strange, but is it actually necessary to go into it now? Owen's downstairs

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with my people—he's been waiting a rather long time for me."

"Let him wait ten minutes longer."

There was something oddly forceful behind that quiet voice, that beautiful face. For all that, Delphine could not be more than two or three years older than herself. Anne sat down.

"Of course," Delphine said, "you represent a type that I resent, for no good reason."

Anne flushed. "I don't quite see—"

But Delphine went on: "I had to earn everything I've got, fairly hard, and to get accustomed to my possessions after I earned them, which is even slightly harder."

Anne said now steadily, "What has all this to do with me—and you—and Owen?"

"Perhaps a great deal, perhaps nothing. You see, I came up here prepared to make a great scene, to do anything necessary—inform your guardians, accuse Owen of this and that he's not done (among the things he has), stop at nothing that might be useful, to prevent your marriage to him."

"Why?"

But Delphine evaded: "No, I have no 'rights' to defend. I wish I did have. I'd have a stronger hand to play." She paused.

ANNE gave her a straight look. "You don't seem to be enjoying this. I certainly am not. Why not stop, since, as you put it, you 'have no rights.' Unless you still want to make a scene, for some reason."

"I told you I'd earned what I've got, Miss Wells. The thing is—I had just not about earned Owen, when you turned up."

"What does that mean?"

"By good behavior. By amusing him, flattering him, being always agreeable, except just enough not so that he wouldn't find me monotonous. By making the most of the things I had and could give him, so that he was coming to the point of not minding the things I didn't and couldn't. He would have married me. Then he met you. And you were well born, well brought up, rich as well as pretty . . ."

"I can't hear any more, Miss Delphine. Really, you must stop. I don't want to be rude—but Owen and I have loved each other since spring, and that of course is not to be discussed by anyone else."

"Nevertheless, Miss Wells, I should make Owen a better wife than you—because I know the worst of him and still want him and want to make something of him! You don't know him at all, and he'll just wreck you to no purpose. He couldn't wreck me. . . . Would you like to know that he's spent part of every day with me, all winter, all the spring, through yesterday, through all the while he's been 'engaged' to you?"

"I don't believe it."

"No; you wouldn't. You're too sure of yourself. Yet—you haven't done anything of your own to make you sure. Everything you are, has been given you."

Then Delphine spoke, as to a child, comfortably: "I could tell you a great many things, speaking as if I knew the words and the music of it all myself, which I don't. I could tell you you'd be better off marrying that young doctor who's so mad about you. Well, I could tell you that Owen

would come nearer to marrying for love if he married me than if he married you; I could tell you I don't mind that he's weak, because I'm strong enough to hold both of us up."

"You seem to be telling me," Anne said. Delphine laughed. "I'll stop. There's only one thing I want of you: Let me go downstairs, find Owen, and bring him up to you."

"Why?"

"Why not?"

"As you like."

"If I don't bring him back in two minutes you can come down yourself. I can't take him very far, in two minutes, if he doesn't want to go."

Anne said, "No doubt you think me very stupid. No doubt you're circles around me in cleverness. But—I wonder what you really want."

"Nothing that I can't get in two minutes' conversation with Owen." . . .

Downstairs, the minutes since Emory Wells had come back with Thomas Carrington had stretched out, from Owen's point of view, to as uncomfortable a half-hour as he had ever spent. So clearly his host and his host's lawyer wanted to get rid of him. Yet he did not want to leave the room until Anne came in. When, Owen decided, they were about to ask him to leave so that they might discuss whatever odd business they had with Alleyne, he stood up, his hand on the door handle, and stayed there talking about the passing of the storm, just to gain minutes.

"I wonder what happened to Dr. Knowlton this evening. It's just occurred to me I haven't seen him since dinner," Lavinia said.

Owen answered quickly, "He made his excuses to Anne. He was called on an emergency case." Hang for a sheep, might as well! Now he must wait in the hall, or outside by the front door, to meet them when they came in. Even if it did look odd, if anyone asked him, he could say he wanted a breath of air.

He opened the door of the room. He said, "Good night." There was a faint murmur of response from everyone. He went out into the hall.

He looked up.

Delphine was coming down the staircase.

DELPHINE, coming down the stairs, walking straight, with her head held high, Owen Nash, who ordinarily knew precisely what he wanted, had a bewildered moment. Did he want money and position more than this girl, who looked through him coolly, saw the worst of him and the best of him, and wanted him as he was? Not as she thought he was—as he was!

"Well, Owen." Her voice mocking, amused, controlled.

"So you came to interfere, Delphine."

"Why not?"

"I thought you had too much common sense."

"It's common sense to do what one can."

"You have no business here."

"Neither have you any more, Owen."

"Delphine, you have no claim on me!"

"Never said I did. I've been telling Miss Wells I did not."

"Where is Anne?"

"Upstairs, in her room. I came to bring you."

Delphine, just then, was no more than

the person opposing him. He went past her quickly, went on up the stairs. But her light footsteps followed him—followed him like Fate.

Anne's door was open. He went in. Delphine was just behind him. She closed the door after her.

The eyes of Anne glanced from his face, to Delphine's, back again, with judgment in them.

"Anne, darling, what happened? Where did that idiot drive you? I've been frantic with worry!" He couldn't make his voice sound convincing, under Delphine's derisive smile.

"Lawrence and I had an accident—it turned out to be trivial."

Delphine spoke: "Well, Owen! I came up because I am an old friend of yours. Old friends are privileged, supposedly. All the privilege I wanted was to make sure for myself you were making no mistake. Miss Wells has told me that you and she have been in love for months. I'd just—it would make me happy to hear you say the same thing. Then I could wish you both all the best and go back in my taxi, which is waiting."

SO SHE dared him to tell Anne, in front of herself, that he loved Anne. He was furious with Delphine. Delphine stood still as a statue. Anne moved a little. Her shoulders moved, her chin, her small, pretty hands.

He said desperately to some negation in that slight, weary movement, "This is all rather silly, Anne. Delphine considers, among the prerogatives of her rather extraordinary success, the right to ride roughshod over—"

Oh, not to the point at all! Far from the point! He saw the flush rising in Anne's cheeks.

Never, anyway—never, especially after this evening's occurrences, had he expected to be glad for the intrusion of Dr. Lawrence Knowlton. But when Dr. Knowlton knocked and opened the door, then, he was extremely glad!

Anne said matter-of-factly, "Lawrence, I do want to speak to you, about how to minimize to Emory and Lavinia our accident tonight. They worry so about me! But, not now. In a little while. If you would not mind waiting, outside, in the upstairs hall."

The doctor made them all a very small bow—too comprehending—and went away.

Desperately Owen said, "Anne, Anne! Don't look like that."

She was still unnecessarily matter-of-factly. "I'm not looking any way specially that I can help, Owen. I am young—so young that I've believed just what I've wanted to believe—about things generally, and you in particular. I expect some day I shan't be as young as that, any more. But now, you must help me." Her voice broke, and quickened when it went on: "Both of you who stand there looking so understanding, of life, the world, each other—tell me the truth now about yourselves and what you are, have been, might have been, to each other. Tell me that at least."

"I told you a little, before, Miss Wells." Delphine was curiously gentle about it.

Anne looked at her straight. "About what Owen was, might have been, to you.

Forgive me, but that's not important unless—he wanted it to be, too."

She turned again to him. Pretty child he'd danced with, thought might be "useful" because of her fortune—her look, her smile that was gallant, yet somehow pitiful, moved him now as she had never yet moved him; even before she said, "Have you loved me, Owen, really—do you love me now?"

He was silent.

Tears suddenly slid down Anne's cheeks. She said, "Don't—not bother, Owen." As if she wanted to comfort him. Then she said, "I'm only crying because—because as I've loved you, I'll never quite love anyone else."

He did not move toward her or touch her, though he would have liked to touch her then. A curious wavering reflection of himself in her dressing-table mirror held him, fascinated. The reflection of a man, of the kind people called "handsome," of a face in this moment strange to himself. What he had become!

They waited, Anne and Delphine, while he confronted his own reflection now. All the tale of his shabby adventures, his lack of scrupulousness at the beginning that necessitated complete unscrupulousness at the end, seemed to stand behind him, to be a dark shadow in the mirror. He thought, "If I could begin again . . ." Could begin with a gay, innocent, and gallant child like this child.

But no one could begin again. All that remained was for him to say good-by, to open the door and go—back to New York, his creditors, whom Delphine, having seen to that he, himself, let his last chance go glimmering, would no doubt lend him money to placate. The fact that he would undoubtedly let her do that now was rather the worst thing of all.

"Good-by, Owen, my dear."

So soft her voice! That voice which would echo fainter and fainter in his memory, would grow confused in time. Anne would forget him soon enough. In her cherished, happy life she would forget, or would remember him perhaps when she was very much older, if ever she happened to catch the face of a young girl in love. Now it would not be he even that she would remember then, but her own young, confident heart. True that he would forget her voice, her eyes, her freshness. True that he would go on, in a little while, as if he had never been. Yet, for that, in an hour at the end, he had loved her!

HE NODDED to her now, saying nothing, as if they two, who had exchanged so many words, finally needed none. He went out, strode past Knowlton in the hall, went downstairs. Now he only wanted to be done with it, with Riverview, Anne, Lavinia, all the people, all the places that were no more for him.

He opened the front door. There was the taxi Delphine had spoken of, waiting. There, suddenly, was Delphine. She was laughing, or weeping, he was not sure which. She was absurdly unlike her steady self. "Owen, last thing I said to that girl was—He wishes he felt that he deserved you."

"My interpreter. . . . Your taxi's waiting."

"Will you come back to town with me, Owen?"

"Thank you, no. I'm going back to

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town, but I'd like to walk—and contemplate. . . . No doubt I'll call on you tomorrow, to borrow money."

She slid her arm through his. "You never have yet, of me."

"Now you've seen to it that I must."

"I suppose so. . . . You know, I came up prepared to make all sorts of scenes to stop your elopement."

"Well, you stopped it. You're unwise to make me feel so important."

"You are—to me."

"Thank you."

"Owen, come along with me in the taxi. It's miles to walk."

He shrugged. "Have it your own way."

But, driving along the dark road, she did not speak to him again for a long time, or feel triumphant about him, at all. . . .

IN THE drawing-room at Riverview, when Owen Nash, after so much silent urging on the part of three people present, finally announced his departure for bed, Lavinia had the strangest reaction—of wishing he'd stayed and so still postponed an hour that might be dreadful and that was sure to be troubling.

But when Thomas Carrington began to speak, in his even, emotionless, lawyer's voice, that feeling left her, and her thoughts raced on, faster far than his voice. To know, at last, the cause of young love's loss of grief never quite forgotten and a heart never quite healed—that, it didn't seem she could wait even minutes longer to know. How had she waited, all the long, monotonous years?

Thomas did not look at her at all, though he addressed her: "Lavinia, Rupert went away, years ago, to save a great scandal. He's come back, to make one."

"No," said Rupert; "I'll tell Lavinia. . . . Lavinia, listen to me. Whatever they'll try to persuade you now, there was a time when no one could have persuaded you of anything against me."

No, not anyone, not even her own mother.

"All right, Rupert," Thomas said. "You tell Lavinia your story."

Why should that permission cause Rupert to look doubting? There was a long instant, before he went on, an instant in which the doubt went away from his face and a kind of triumph succeeded it.

"Lavinia, I left you, toward sunset on a day very like today, a day of approaching storm. I went home, dined, and began two or three letters to you to—propose to you."

Genuine—if she had ever heard anything genuine—the quiver, the regret, the sadness in those words.

"I was still in my room writing, though it was very late, and the storm was some time ended when Emory came to see me—not by the door, by the French window of my room, which was a ground-floor room. Emory was extremely excited and disheveled. He told me that, driving through the storm, he had knocked down an old man, a man named Simeon Jarvis, whom you wouldn't know, of course, Lavinia; he used to do odd jobs for the Welles and for other families in the village. Emory said that he knew he should have stopped, but that he was frightened too badly. Besides, he was sure that the man was dead."

"He had gone home. But shortly after his arrival home the telephone rang. It was Bevan Petrie, an old friend of the

Wells family. Bevan had been for a walk after the rain, had seen Emory's car come out of the lane, had walked on, had seen and recognized the dying old man."

Emory looked tense as some great animal about to leap.

"Lavinia," Rupert said, "Emory told me that he'd told I was driving the car. He gave me good reasons—that he was his mother's only child, that she was not strong and could not stand the shock of a catastrophe happening to him as well as she could stand having one happen to me, who was only a connection by marriage."

He stopped again.

This time Emory said, "Go on, why don't you? Or are you finding it difficult?"

"Not difficult at all. Well, then, Emory asked me to back up his story by going out of the country for a time. He said Bevan Petrie would not go to the police, necessarily—particularly if I shouldered the blame by disappearing, that the case would become one of those 'manslaughter by person or persons unknown'; and when everyone had forgotten it—which would be soon enough, since poor old Jarvis had neither near relatives nor intimate friends—I could come back. . . . But, Lavinia, there was you. I did not agree quickly, because of you. Still, Emory and I had been brought up like brothers. I was fond of his mother. When Emory said it was only necessary for me to disappear for a few weeks, I consented. Emory provided funds. I had only time to write you a note. When I was ready to come back I heard that you and Emory were married. So there was nothing for me to come back for. . . ."

He waited then, it was plain to see, for Lavinia to speak. Every bit of her heart wanted to believe him. Every bit of her mind, all she'd learned about Emory through their whole marriage, could not believe. But, one thing might resolve the rest. She asked, "Why did you come back now, after so long. . . .?"

For the first time Rupert hesitated. Then he hurried his words, as if he wanted to hurry past something, so that she should not notice. "I was lonely. I had lived long enough, I felt, under a cloud. I thought Emory might be willing to help me, considering what I had done for him. Besides, I wanted to see you. . . ."

"Well," said Thomas Carrington, "how much of that do you want to believe, Lavinia?"

"I—don't—know."

THOMAS gave her the most curious, straight look, as if she'd passed some sort of test. "All right, Emory. Tell your wife the truth."

Emory spoke quietly, not dramatically at all: "This part I never told before—that I'd known surely for days, probably for a week or two before that night, that you loved Rupert, Lavinia. A time came when I couldn't seem to bear it. I couldn't bear to watch you, so glowing with love, not love of me! That afternoon of your birthday I saw you and Rupert standing by the meadow gate. And then I just could not go into the house, sit next you at dinner. I went walking in the hills, through the storm, trying—trying to be able to face it that I had lost you."

"I had lent my car to Rupert that day. He'd said he wanted to make some calls that evening. Very late, when I came



home, and thought everyone would be in bed, Rupert was in my room. He told me the story he's just told you—except, you understand, he was driving the car, and he had the accident. It's quite true that Bevan Petrie saw the car coming out of the lane and went on, to discover poor Jarvis. But Bevan saw something else, that Rupert didn't mention—he noticed the car because it stopped in a dark part of the lane. He saw Rupert plainly in the light of the headlights, wiping something off the fender."

"Interesting new detail," Rupert said. Emory shook his head in a kind of blind gesture of protest and went on, almost apologetically: "Bevan had already telephoned, and Rupert had told him that he was mistaken about having seen him, that I had the car somewhere."

"Next morning—very early—Bevan came to see my mother. But for a lifelong friendship with all of us I'm sure he would have gone straight to the police. Sometimes I wonder that he did not. I had told Rupert . . ."

STILL that note of apology growing in his quiet voice. He seemed altogether unable to go on, for a minute. Then, clearly by great effort, he steadied himself. "I had told Rupert that I would say I had been driving the car, because I knew that you loved him, not me, Lavinia. I didn't want your life to be spoiled. I wanted you to have what you wanted. A young girl's dreams are so—so not to be replaced. Well, there isn't much more. I made no denial. But Bevan must have been more positive than he pretended about having recognized Rupert."

"Finally, toward evening, Bevan came to me and said that Rupert had told the truth, and would I at least reassure my mother, who was so broken? I did. I told her that she must tell no one; that I was going away, because you loved Rupert. That it was better that I should be blamed, if it came to definite police blame on either of us."

"Bevan confronted Rupert with the fact of my presence at a farmhouse, miles away from the accident at the time it occurred, and with my admission to my mother. Well, Rupert did confess then. My mother, unreasonably but naturally I suppose, blamed him dreadfully for not speaking the truth in the beginning, from wanting to shelter behind me, as she put it. She gave him some money, a considerable sum, and told him to go away."

"Sometimes, in the years since, I have blamed myself, have thought that if I had kept my original pledge to Rupert, you might have been happier, Lavinia, and Rupert might—might have been all right."

Thomas Carrington spoke evenly: "So, Lavinia, which story do you believe now?" She said, "I believe my husband, of course. I have no doubt of him."

Rupert's bitter words swept out, a torrent of words, in which Lavinia heard only: "I never believed you would fail me, Lavinia, or doubt me, or be convinced by plausible lies."

"That's enough," Thomas's voice snapped. "I wanted, Lavinia, for your future good, and Emory's, for you to make your choice, without proof! But there is proof." He was taking papers out of his brief case. All had risen, in their

emotion. "Sit down—all of you, unless, Alleyne, you're afraid to hear proof. As you should be."

Emory looked puzzled, Rupert suddenly doubting, Thomas altogether confident. They sat down. Emory held Lavinia's hand—almost shyly.

"I am about to read a deposition written by Bevan Petrie when he knew he had not long to live."

Rupert Alleyne's face changed. He looked frightened.

And Emory gasped, "He was so sure that Rupert would come back, he wrote it down!"

"Yes, and gave his statement to me, sensibly. I was the family lawyer, he'd been a lawyer before he retired. He knew there's no time limit on a homicide case, that though it was unlikely the death of Simon Jarvis would ever be reopened, in the normal course of things, it could be reopened, if anyone were either interested, or malicious, enough to wish to cause you trouble! It's plain when I read." And he began:

"I, Bevan Petrie, realizing that certain facts of which I am the sole possessor should be put down for the protection of Emory Wells, the son of my dear friend . . ."

Unhandsome, old, Rupert Alleyne's face turned toward that voice. Rupert said, "Stop; it isn't necessary," and turned then to Lavinia, as if he wanted her to help him.

"Perhaps you are right. Perhaps, even at the last, it is not necessary to read it all," Thomas said.

Then Rupert laughed, a laugh shocking in its mirthlessness. "What does it matter? Read it through."

They all listened; Lavinia listened to this precise substantiation of Emory's account, which was not so important as it might have been had Emory's conduct through ten years of marriage left her any doubt. Only, it had not. She was glad—she hoped it would be a comfort to Emory—that she had believed him at once, without any proof!

Sometimes she listened to the words. Sometimes she thought of Emory. Of Rupert she could not bear yet to think at all.

THOMAS was reading: "I was making no effort to conceal myself, having no reason, as I walked along the lane, but the trees by the footpath were heavily-foliaged. When an automobile, driven rapidly, approached me from the direction of the river, the driver apparently did not notice me. At a distance of twenty feet (I have paced the distance since, to make sure) the driver stopped his car suddenly, at a place where the woods are especially thick, as if he had not premeditated this stop, but had decided upon it on impulse. There was a great noise of brakes applied fast. The driver got out."

"Plainly as in broad daylight I saw the driver as he moved in front of my headlights. It was Rupert Alleyne, whom I had known since his boyhood. I was about to speak, but some impulse held me silent, while Rupert Alleyne attempted to wipe off, from the front of his car, some substance."

"The headlights were very bright. As I have said, I was within twenty feet. So I saw that the substance which he was so carefully removing from a fender and one of the lights was a red substance, like

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blood. At the same time, I recognized the car as a dark blue roadster belonging to Emory Wells, Rupert Alleyne's cousin. I had seen Emory driving it many times, and I even knew the license number.

"It all happened very quickly. He finished wiping off this substance, got in the car, drove on past me, in no more time probably than it is taking me to write this down."

Thomas read on and on, through the discovery of Simeon Jarvis' body and the account of all that happened the rest of the night and next day.

RUPERT stood up. "Let's be done with it—do you mind?"

Thomas Carrington said, "Bevan Petrie made a prediction," and turned the pages and read:

"At the end of my life I am convinced that men's behavior in crises is constant. Rupert Alleyn remains to me the person who left an old man on a roadside, helpless, to die, and was willing his cousin should take the guilt. Rupert Alleyn will spend his money, and lose it, make more money, and spend that. One day he'll come back to Emory for money. He'll threaten to tell his version of an old story.

"This document is written, witnessed,  
sworn to, to be used when he returns.

“(Though Emory Wells, his cousin, would not believe he will ever return.)

"Signed, BEVAN PETRIE."

That was all, then, except that Rupert lingered, his eyes desolate, longing. In that moment Lavinia knew how he would look when his haggard dark beauty was gone forever, when his smile could mock no longer himself or her, or the rules by which men lived and sometimes died.

She heard her husband say, "Lavinia, do you blame me?"

"Blame you, my dear? Because you didn't completely throw away your life? I'm so glad you did not." Her own voice sang, then.

RUPERT said, "I'll go along now, having got nothing at all of what I came for. That is, I'll go along if you can provide me with a car, Emory."

"I should like to see you a moment before you go, Rupert." Emory sounded very diffident about it. Lavinia thought, "You darling, you darling! You want to give him some money. Only, you don't want me to know, because you're afraid I'd think you were being superior."

She said, "I'm going out onto the terrace, Emory. I should like some fresh air before I go to sleep."

Rupert's voice stopped her: "Will you say good-by, Lavinia?"

She turned. She said, "Good-by," and then stood, for a second's space, in the doorway. From across the width of the room, from across a gulf of years, he looked at her for the last time.

She thought, "For the last time. Yet, the last time was truly long ago."

Through the whole mad evening he had torn at her heart. Through minutes when she had believed that she still loved him. Never any more. Her heart was whole at last. Her heart was Emory's, safely, forever. Ah! She must think how to make Emory sure, as she was sure now finally.

Rupert said, surprisingly, "I hope we never meet again, Lavinia."

There was no good-by that she could make to him. He and she had nothing else in life to say to each other. Only, because that was dreary knowledge about young love, which in its time was gay and warm, sudden tears were in her eyes. He saw them, as she nodded to him.

So she turned, with her graceful, swaying walk, and went out of the door.

Up from the meadow gate came Anne and Dr. Knowlton.

That was extraordinary! But at the moment it did not seem specially important.

Anne's clear voice was saying something Lavinia did not understand: "If it hadn't been for that strange girl, Delphine, I couldn't have faced it—recognized it for what it was, in time."

Then Anne saw her. "There you are, Lavinia! Dr. Knowlton's staying. He got rain-soaked and Martin had to provide him with things of Emory's. . . . I'll explain to you tomorrow."

"All right. Sleep well, my dear. Good night, Lawrence."

They went on past her, inside, and Emory came out.

SHE found words for him—she that was no good at words. But it seemed so important, now. . . . "I should have known that underneath your quietness was strength, and beneath your unpretentiousness, courage. You are pure gold. I was a foolish girl not to have known that in the beginning. Bevan Petrie knew. What Rupert did was what he was. Let us forget him. It's a poor ghost to stand between what you and I are to each other."

He was pleased, comforted, reassured, forever probably. Lavinia knew it.

Though Emory only said, "I have a birthday present for you, though it is a little late."

Of course, he would not have forgotten. He handed her a small package, obviously, by its shape, a ring box. No doubt he was giving her some sort of dinner ring to add to her small, fine collection. Silly to have so much difficulty untying a bit of string, unwrapping a piece of paper.

Shining in the moonlight like—like tears,  
the circle of diamonds on a most modern  
wedding ring.

"Anne said you didn't like your plain gold band."

Lavinia remembered that only before dinner she had been thinking how much she disliked it! But that, with so many other things, seemed different now.

"I'll wear this for galas, Emory. But I couldn't give up my plain ring, really."

Her husband kissed her, and said, "My dear,"

Phrase with the cadences of long years of marriage about it. Altogether pleasant phrase.

**NEXT MONTH:** Beautiful Donna Blake, private investigator, gambles her marriage against the solution of a penthouse murder. **THERE'S ALWAYS A WOMAN**, by Wilson Collison, is an American short mystery novel complete in the January issue.

# Merry MEDDIER

(Continued from page 128)

it. Anyway it wasn't very comfortable."

At the back of the house the kitchen door opened and closed. Heels clicked through the house.

"Where's my cucumber sandwich?" Cissy asked from the doorway. She gave one glance in Rich's direction, and walked straight to the tea table and took a sandwich and a cup of tea. Rich bent over his bag, and poured tablets from a bottle.

"Take this, every hour," he yelled at old Sarah. "Good afternoon!" He turned and marched stiffly into the hall.

Cissy sat back and smiled. "I just couldn't resist the cucumber sandwiches," she said. "But don't you do it again, Aunt Sarah. He's awfully funny, running away from me, but it's sort of mean. Now I'm going back to Grandfather. He has a headache. Good-by, Aunt Sarah."

Old Sarah stared after her. "Hm!" she said. "That didn't work very well. It looks as if I might have to spank Cissy's grandfather, after all. And while I'm doing that, I might take Rich's mother through it, too." She caught sight of the white envelope lying on the table. "Throw these things away," she said.

"But your cold," Janet protested. Old Sarah's self-assurance returned to her with a rush. "There's nothing like soapuds up your nose to bring out symptoms of a bad head cold. . . ."

**RICH WYATT** ran in the next morning. "How's the cold?" he asked.

Old Sarah sniffed. "All gone."

"The medicine must have been good."

"Oh, no. I had Janet throw it away."

"That's all right. You didn't have a cold, anyway."

Old Sarah chuckled. "You have more sense than I thought, Rich. I wish you'd develop some about Cissy."

Rich frowned. "I wish she'd go away somewhere. I don't like having someone around that I have to be rude to."

"Then don't be."

Rich shook his head. "You're a meddling old woman," he said.

"Meddling," said old Sarah, "is my chief interest in life."

"Go ahead and meddle, then," said Rich, "but it won't do you any good, in this case. I don't like the state of affairs, but I'm not going back on Mother."

"I wonder," said old Sarah, "if your mother hates old Henry Hartley quite so much as you think she does."

"She's got a right to hate him."

Old Sarah tapped her trumpet. "It begins to look more and more as if I shall have to administer those spankings."

Rich shook his head, and presently went away. . . .

Old Sarah never gave up a project. But this one she seemed to put aside and neglect. Rich came in frequently, and Cissy, too, but never did they come together.

One day old Sarah said to Cissy, "Tell your grandfather to come in to see me at teatime."

"Going to spank him?" Cissy shouted. "You never can tell."

Half an hour before teatime old Sarah put on the light silk dress that brought out the color of her plump old cheeks, did her hair carefully, and asked Janet to see that there were sandwiches.

She sat down in her chair, and at four Henry Hartley arrived. Janet poured the tea, and discreetly retired to the kitchen— but she left the door open and peeked.

Old Sarah greeted her little old neighbor kindly, and he said, "I see you have the date sandwiches for me, Sarah."

"Yes," said old Sarah; "I wanted you in a good humor. I'm going to give you a piece of my mind."

**HENRY HARTLEY** said, "I've known you for sixty years, Sarah, and you've given me a piece of your mind about once a month. I wonder you have any left."

"My mind," said old Sarah, "is like something out of a fairy tale. It grows a new piece whenever I give an o'd one away. . . . Lemon or cream?"

"Neither, thank you. I may be doddering, but I still take my tea straight."

"That," said old Sarah, "is a horrible way to take tea. However, that has nothing to do with the matter in question."

"And what," asked Henry Hartley, "is the matter in question?"

Old Sarah put her trumpet on her lap. "A long time ago you told me that if there was ever anything that I wanted of you, I only needed to ask and it would be done. It was the time Cissy swallowed the marble and I held her up by the heels until she spit it out. Do you remember?"

Cissy's grandfather nodded.

"I didn't do a thing that anyone else wouldn't have done, but you seemed to think I had saved Cissy's life. Anyway, the time has come when I'm going to ask you to keep your word. Will you?"

"If I can," said Henry Hartley. "I'm not so young as I used to be."

"All the more reason for doing what I want you to do."

Henry Hartley squirmed a little. "I can't say Yes until I know what it is."

"You disappoint me, Henry," said old Sarah. "I want you to make your peace with Elsie Wyatt."

Henry Hartley smiled. "Sarah, you're a meddling old woman."

Old Sarah chuckled. "You'd be surprised to know how many people have called me that lately. . . . But that's off the subject. What I want to know is, will you?"

"No, Sarah, I won't."

"You're an old man, Henry," she reminded him. "And you have been thinking for years that your son suffered from what Elsie did. He didn't. He was very much happier in his second marriage than he ever could have been with Elsie. Those two would never have married, in the first place, if you hadn't set your head on the

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match. It's more your fault than theirs that the marriage was not a success, but they had sense enough to realize it before there were any children. Henry, you've been wrong about Elsie Wyatt for thirty years, and it's time you admitted it."

"Perhaps, but I don't intend to."

Old Sarah rose now from her chair.

"Then get out of my house, Henry Hartley. I'll never speak to you again until you do what you ought to."

Henry Hartley left with dignity.

And when Janet came to clear away the tea things the outrageous old lady was shaking with silent laughter.

FOR several days nothing happened. February had by this time eased into March, and the days were longer, so that by the time the tea hour was over, there was still daylight outside.

Then one morning Janet found old Sarah drumming with the trumpet.

"We'll have nut bread for tea this afternoon, Janet. Elsie is coming and she always liked it. And I expect you'd better retire to the kitchen again, because I'm going to give away another piece of my mind."

So Janet made the nut bread, and just at four Elsie Wyatt—she that had been Elsie Hartley for a little part of her life—came across the lawn. Janet brought in the tea and poured it, and retired.

Elsie sat down and took up her cup, and nibbled at a sandwich. "Good," she said.

"Of course they are good. Janet made them," said old Sarah.

They sat in silence for some moments.

"Well, Elsie," old Sarah said, "I've quarreled with Henry Hartley—we're not speaking."

"Good heavens!" cried Elsie.

"We quarreled about you."

Suddenly Elsie was very nervous. "About—me?" she said uncertainly.

"Yes," said old Sarah. "I told him he was going to die one of these days, and he'd better make his peace with you first. He said he wouldn't, and I ordered him out of the house. I told him I wouldn't speak to him, but he hasn't given me a chance to keep my promise. I'm sort of sorry about that. I'd get a lot of pleasure out of not speaking to Henry."

"It isn't very pleasant," said Elsie slowly. "I haven't spoken to him since I came back here, after Rich's father died, and Henry Hartley has passed the house every morning in all these years."

"Suppose some morning," old Sarah suggested, "he should look up to where you sit on your porch, and forget himself and speak to you. What would you do?"

"I'd speak, of course," Elsie said simply.

"Would you honestly, Elsie?" Old Sarah seemed genuinely surprised.

"Yes, I would. He never did me any wrong," Elsie said. "I hated him when I came home and he drove Rich from his house. But I don't hate him now. I'm not young any longer, and I don't seem to have the energy to hate people."

Old Sarah sat for a long time in silence.

"I got you over here, Elsie," she said finally, "to give you a piece of my mind, but you took the wind out of my sails. . . . So Henry never did anything to you?"

"Nothing that I didn't bring on myself.

I never should have married Paul.

Old Sarah shook her head. "That's what Tom and I thought. We figured you were headed for trouble."

"You loved us, too, didn't you?"

Old Sarah nodded. "You took the place of the children Tom and I never had."

Elsie reached over and took one pink hand in her own. "No, I should never have married Paul. I was a whirlwind and he was calm and steady. I nearly drove him crazy that year we were married. But I made a man out of him, Aunt Sarah."

Old Sarah looked at her, and waited.

"He wasn't weak, Paul wasn't, but just one of those persons who liked to do what other people wanted them to. That was the way he tried to treat me, but I went too far. I wanted more gaiety than Paul cared for, and I drove him to the place where he made up his mind for himself, at last. I didn't marry him because I loved him, but to get away from Grant's Mill. And by the time I began to realize that he was rather wonderful, after all, I had killed whatever liking he might have had for me. Getting the divorce was the best thing I ever did."

"You mean," said old Sarah, "that you loved Paul?"

"Yes, I did, but it came too late."

Old Sarah sighed. "I wish you'd tell Henry Hartley that. It might make a difference."

Elsie shook her head. "No, Aunt Sarah. Too many years have gone by. It would be useless to drag the whole miserable thing out again."

Old Sarah nodded. "I suppose so."

Elsie presently went back across the lawn and into her house. Old Sarah

watched her through the window and sighed again.

The days passed, and the spring came in its height. Aunt Sarah sat in her chair and said, "Go away, I want to think," a dozen times between morning and evening.

Meanwhile Janet enjoyed the spring. She stood in the kitchen door and looked out and gloated. One day she stood there and saw Cissy coming across the lawn from one direction and Rich Wyatt from the other. They were walking, heads down, apparently deep in thought.

Janet watched from behind the curtain. Cissy came on, and Rich came on, and suddenly they saw each other.

Defiantly, Cissy said, "Hello, Rich."

Rich looked straight back at her, smiled, and said, "Hello, yourself."

"Nice day, isn't it?" said Cissy.

"Perfect," said Rich.

Cissy walked up the steps. Rich hesitated, and followed her. Janet scrambled quickly out of sight, and stayed in hiding until Cissy called her: "Janet! I want your recipe for oatmeal muffins!" Rich went on through the house to see old Sarah.

Janet could hardly wait until they were gone, to tell the old lady. Old Sarah brightened and clapped her hands.

"Well, well, well," she said, gleefully. "Now, isn't that nice?"

SEVERAL days later old Sarah ordered lobster salad and hot rolls for supper.

"But, Aunt Sarah! Lobster salad!"

"My dear Janet, I know it makes me sick, but I'm eighty, and if I want to eat something that makes me sick, it's nobody's fault but my own if I am sick."

So Janet made the rolls and the salad reluctantly, and old Sarah ate them. Sure enough, it was not long before the old lady was white-lipped and ill.

"You were right, Janet," she said miserably.

Janet put her to bed. Old Sarah lay and groaned and grew whiter.

"I meant to eat only a little, but I made a pig of myself as usual. I think this time I am going to die," she said. "You go tell Elsie that I want Rich as soon as he can come. And tell Elsie

to come over, and go get Henry Hartley—there's something I want to tell them."

"Aunt Sarah, do you think you—?"

"Do as I tell you before it's too late."

Janet ran for Elsie and left the message for Rich, and then went back across lots for Henry Hartley.

"Oh, come quick," Janet begged him. "I think old Sarah's going to die."

Henry Hartley hurried into old Sarah's bedroom. She was lying flat on her back, her face twisted with the pain.

"I'm sick, Henry," she said weakly.

"Yes, Sarah," he said, "I can see that."

Old Sarah started



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